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Together with the Three LETTERS and QUE-
RIES themselves.

They shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward; saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD, in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten.



Printed by Mr. JAMES M'EUEN and COMPANY,
and sold at the said Mr. M'Euen's Shop, and by
other Booksellers, 1728.

APR 11 1961

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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JOHN H. COLE
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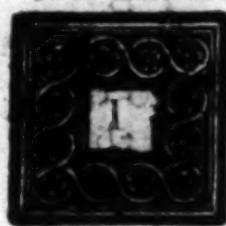
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THE PREFACE.

READER,



THE following Queries were writ upon a Presbyterian Minister's enveighing publicly against the Lawfulness of *National Covenanting*. The Letters in Answer to them I reckon have been done by one of the same Denomination; tho' he has not had the Resolution of his Brother in Iniquity, but sent me his Papers by an unknown Hand. And indeed a true blue Whig could never have patronised them. For whatever Reputation they had here for some Months

Months among a certain Sort of People, yet the intelligent Reader will easily see they contain a great many loose and dangerous Tenets, satyrizing our Covenants, and Way of Reforming from Popery.

It cannot miss to be extremely surprizing to those who have the Peace of the Church at Heart, to see Men of our own Communion scribbling against, and lampooning the first sacred Bonds of our happy Constitution, after we have so long enjoyed the blessed Effects of them, and thir very Gentlemen, among others, shar'd of their benig Influence. If our Covenants had been attack'd by the open and avowed Enemies of our Establishment, we wou'd have known what to say and think of them. But when we see the Sons of our Mother tearing her Bowels, to make up a *Secularian Hydra*, 'tis not so easy to imagine how we are to deal with them; especially when some of them have confined the Seat of all Church Power and Jurisdiction to another World.

Some Years ago we were stuff'd and cram'd, even to nauseating, with the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*, smoothing the *Antinomian* Doctrine to us; And now by a *Rump* of the same Men, we have got some of the worst Parts of the *Independant Scheme* brought upon the Stage. But where

P R E F A C E.

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where their Ramblers in Religion will make a Stand, is hard to say: For they having left the *Good Old Way*, are like for ever to wander in *By-paths*; especially since in many Things they seem to have little Regard to the universal Practice and Doctrine of the Christian Church, but like all other *Enthusiasts* and *Libertines*, go upon their own dark and undisgested Speculations.

I pity some of them, who are otherwise Men of Temper and Learning; and I heartily wish that all of them were brought to a right Mind and Way of Thinking. But, while forgetting their own Notion of Church Power, they go on to consult with and appeal to the Populace, instead of the Scriptures, Confession of Faith and Acts of Assembly, I despair of their Conversion. Yet if they wou'd be so kind as not to quarrel me for mixing Interests with them, I could find in my Heart, for once, to apply the same Tribunal, and demand of all the Christian People in *Scotland*, of the Presbyterian Way, if it be either natural, mannerly or just, for any who yet call themselves Presbyterian Ministers, openly to enveigh against our *National Covenants*, founded upon the Word of God, ratified and



LETTER I.

SIR,



IN the National Covenant our Forefathers promised to continue during Life, in the Obedience of the Doctrine and Discipline of this Church, under the Pains contained in the Law, and of the fearful Judgment of God at the great Day; that is, they swore that Religion may be produced by humane Penalties, they made the Authority of Men a Ground of Faith, and annex'd the Wrath of God to these Things, to which God himself has not annex'd it: For either they made the Divine Judgment follow the least Variation of the Doctrine and Discipline at that Time established, which was equivalent to an Assertion of their own Infallibility, and consequently a very modest Sentence pass'd upon every Man and Church, who in the least differed from them; or else they were to accompany the Church in all the possible Changes it might undergo, in Doctrine or Discipline, and by this Means believing as the Church believed, and practising as it directed, they would continue always in its Obedience.

It appears from the first Article of the *Solemn League*, that it was designed to introduce into the Churches of *Britain* and *Ireland*, an Uniformity in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, which was in effect to put the Faith and Religious Practice of Three Nations under the Command of the Clergy and an Army. And, as tho' this had not been sufficient, by the Fourth Article the Parliament, and Judges deputed by them, must by Arbitrary Punishments help forward the blessed Design; and all this was to be done, that they and their Posterity after them, might as Brethren live in Faith and Love, and the Lord might delight to dwell among them: As if the Almighty had been as revengful as themselves, and could not dwell where Men differ'd in any Thing that may be called *Doctrine* or *Government*; as if Christian Love was only to be extended to those of our own Sect, and the Gospel of Mercy was to be propagated by Methods of Cruelty. I hope Men are wiser now than to be taken with these plausible Baits; the Faith and Brotherly Love which we are told these Means will produce, is Stupidity and Implacable Hatred; and the Peace and Prosperity promised to the Church, is but another Phrase for the Dominion of the Clergy, which is founded on Uniformity, and is always in Proportion to it. As it is therefore the Interest of these Clergymen, who think Dominion a Branch of their Office, so it has always been their Endeavour, to make all Men think as they are bid; and Persecution being the surest Method of accomplishing this, they have never failed to use it, whenever they had Power. The Covenant discovers a manifest Partiality this Way, the Inquisition and persecuting Spirit of Popery are not
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abjured with its other Errors, tho' they are its worst Errors, because they support all the rest; on the contrary, it lays an Obligation upon Men, to practise this most inhumane Part of Popery, and that it was practised is evident from the Accounts we have of these Times. Thanks to God and our gracious Sovereign it is not so now; but it seems some People are not satisfy'd, but look back with wishing Eyes upon that Power, of which no doubt they think themselves sacrilegiously rob'd.

Our Saviour declared that his Kingdom was not of this World, and consequently that the Interest thereof cannot be promoted by the Rewards and Punishments of this World. He likewise forbade his Apostles the Exercise of Dominion. But it seems to be the Opinion of some Men, that this was only the Dominion of one Apostle, or one Clergyman over the rest, and not of the whole Clergy over the christian Laity. But if the Consciences of the People are to be fetter'd, is it any Consolation to them, that this is done by a Presbytery, and not by a Pope or a Prelate! Does not a Bishop, who disclaims this, act more agreeably to the Christian Institution, than a Presbytery who claim it? And if a Presbytery exercise the same Power with a Bishop there is no Difference, but in the Name, which is but a small Recompence for the Loss of Religion, which always abates in Proportion as humane Authority prevails. Religion is the Fear of God, it can't be the Effect of Power, which is the Fear of Man. Force may make Men Hypocrites, and offend God, but it can't inform, much less convince the Understanding, which is the Way Religion must enter the Soul. Since therefore the Dominion of the Clergy is contrary both to Scripture and Reason, it must

be impracticable, unless it is back'd with Persecution, the only prevailing Argument. It is vain to think, any Man will be catechised into the Opinion of it, except such who by being instructed, or not sufficiently warn'd against the leading Error of Popery, implicate Faith, yield an obsequious Assent to all the Reveries of their Teachers. This Method you have taken in your Queries to the Reverend Mr. G-----s, which I shall consider in Order.

Quest. 1. *Have not all Societies a natural and intrinsic Power, to prescribe and impose their own Terms of Communion, even by Contract and Covenant, if they have a mind?*

Ans. Every civil Society has a natural and intrinsic Power, to decide civil Controversies by Majority of Votes, to make Laws by their own Authority, declaring upon what Terms the Privileges of the Community are to be enjoy'd, to repeal old Ones to that Effect when they are found insufficient, and to use the united Force of the Society to procure Obedience to these Laws and Decisions; but I hope it does not follow, that every Christian Society or Church, that is (according to modern Acceptation) the Clergy of every Church, have the like natural and intrinsic Power, to decide Articles of Faith by Majority of Votes, to prescribe new Terms of Communion by their own Authority, and abrogate the old Ones contain'd in the Scriptures, when they are not suitable to their Designs; and after all to impose these Articles of Faith, or these Terms of Communion upon whole Nations, or upon the whole World (for there is no Limitation in the Query) and oblige them by Penalties, both to receive and wear them in Opposition to their Consciences. What bless'd State wou'd the World be reduced to, if this

this was every where put in Practice, as it is already in too many Parts of it? It wou'd put an End to all the Differences betwixt right and wrong, and make Religion as variable as the Interests and Passions of Men. We wou'd then be eas'd the Trouble of using our own Understandings, by leaving them to the Clergy; and if they cou'd assure us, that they only wou'd be damn'd for the Abuse of them, it might be some Inducement to give them up. But as every Man must answer for his own Conduct, it must be the highest Impiety to require it. There is something more absurd in this than in Popery itself; the Pope pretends to be infallible, and very consistently therewith requires an absolute Submission to all his Dictates; but for a Protestant Clergy, who acknowledge themselves capable of Error, to make the same Claim, is a very modest Demand upon all Mankind to accompany them in their Errors.

If all Societies have a natural and intrinsick Power, to prescribe and impose their own Terms of Communion, even by Contract and Covenant, if they will, then Popish Societies have this Power, and we acted unjustly in separating from them, only because they assum'd this Power; if they have it not, the same Reasons that prove this, will prove that no other Christian Society has it. A natural Power in Societies to prescribe, impose and make Men swear Term of religious Communion, is a Contradiction to all Religion, which cannot subsist where Conscience is violated. When a Man by his own Understanding sees the Conformity of any Truth to the Scriptures, he believes it on Account of that Conformity, and there can be no imposing it on him, when his Mind consents to it; But if any Man or Number of Men will oblige him to believe it, con-

rary to the Dictates of his Understanding, when he perceives, or thinks he perceives, its Repugnancy to Scripture, this is imposing, and is an impious Usurpation of the Authority of God, who only can controul the Consciences of Men. When it shall be made appear, that the christian Religion was design'd, to make all Men of one Mind, in every Point that has been made a Term of religious Communion; or that in Fact all the Men of any Nation ever did or can agree in all these Points, and were infallibly certain, they wou'd never see Reason to fall in the least from that Agreement, upon better Information, the Lawfulness of national covenanting may be urged with a better Grace; but till this is done, you must allow me to think, that such covenanting can advance no Man's Interest in the other World, tho' it may promote infinite Confusion in this.

Quest. 2. *Are not all Churches gathered and constitute at least by implicate Covenanting?*

Quest. 3. *Did not the Apostles themselves, in pursuance of their Commission, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20 bring those they discipl'd, under the strongest Obligations imaginable, to profess Christianity, and keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace?*

Ans. If by implicate Covenanting you mean a Profession of Christianity, then it is certain that all Churches are gathered this Way, and that the Apostles brought their Disciples under the strongest Obligations to it, that either Instruction, Conviction, or the Authority of God could lay upon them. But is this National Covenanting? Or does it justify a solemn League? Which convinces the Understanding by Penalties, sets the Authority of Men in Place of the Authority of God, and renders

Instruction impracticable; for who can think the good of his Soul is intended, by the same Means which ruins his Body. In the very Time of the Apostles, Christians began to differ amongst themselves, both in Points of Doctrine and Practice, and they knew it would continue so, for our Saviour had foretold it; but they left no Instructions for the stronger Party, to oblige the rest to swear Agreement with them: No, they exhorted them to Charity, Meekness and Forbearance, Qualities inconsistent with a Covenanting Spirit, which when it has Power, it effectually banishes from the Earth.

Quest. 4. *Was not the Apostolical Creed, as we call it, originally designed to preserve Church Communion?*

Quest. 5. *Did not the primitive Christians swear and seal it as a Covenant?*

Quest. 6. *Was it not enlarged and sworn anew as Heresies sprung and broke out in the Church?*

Ans. The Primitive Christians were altogether ignorant of Covenanting, that modern Engine of Power; and when in Process of Time they began to follow that Way, we all know the Effects of it. They had indeed some brief Forms, absolutely necessary to express their Profession of Christianity; but the Apostolical Creed was not known during the first three Centuries, however it was afterwards introduced, and the last Enlargement it received was from Pope Pius IV. who added several Articles concerning the Belief of Transubstantiation, the Worship of the blessed Virgin, and of dead Mens Bones, and sundry other orthodox Tenets, in Opposition, it seems, to the Heresies that sprung up about that Time. In this new Form I believe it is used somewhere as a

Preservative of Church Communion, and for ought I know they oblige every Body to swear to it.

Quest. 7. *Does not the very Word Religion, from religo, import a binding us together in its Profession and Practice?*

Ans. A Cause stands in need of Supports indeed, when it brings them from the Dictionary. Sure we may be bound together, in a religious Profession and Practice, without a Solemn League and Covenant.

Quest. 8. *Be pleased to tell me what essential Ingredient the subscribing our Confession of Faith, with the other Vows Ministers come under at their Ordination, want of an ordinary Covenant Engagement?*

Ans. I leave you this to answer your self. If you think there is no essential Difference, and the one is plainly unlawful, what will you make of the other?

Quest. 9. *Whether these Old Testament Covenants you read of 2 Kings, xi. 17. 2 Chron. xv. 12. xxix. 10. xxxiv. 3. and else-where may be imitated?*

Quest. 10. *If they were typical, as I hear you maintain, I ask what they can more naturally prefigure then our, and such like National Covenants, made or to be made for Reformation, as they plainly were?*

Ans. I answer they are not to be imitated. No Doubt they were founded on something peculiar in the Jewish Law, which does not agree to the Christian Institution. The Consequence of that Covenant in the first Text referred to, was the killing of Baal's Priests; an Article of that in the second Text was, that every Man and Woman who did not agree to it should be put to Death, and generally all the Old Testament Covenants ended in the De-

Destruction of the Worshipers of *Baal*, and other
 Dissenters from the *Jewish* Church. If this was to
 be imitated now, it would make the World an uni-
 versal Shambles, and turn the Religion of the merci-
 ful Jesus, into a Religion like that of *Mabomet*.
 Every King thinks his own Church the true Church,
 and the late *French* King butchered his Protestant
 Subjects, under the Notion of Hereticks or Wor-
 shipers of *Baal*. When the Apostles of our Lord
 yet full of the same Spirit, which has inspired too many
 of their Successors, would have brought down Fire
 from Heaven to destroy a Village of the *Samaritans*,
 because they would not receive him, and pleaded the
 Example of *Elias*, what Answer had they from the
 Saviour of the World? *Ye know not what Man-
 ner of Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not
 come to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them.*
 A sufficient Caution, methinks, for all his Followers,
 not to plead the Imitation of some *Jewish* Practices,
 nor to think of making Men Christians by hurting
 either their Bodies or Estates. But when these
 same Apostles were endued with Power from on
 High, and understood the Nature of the Christian
 Dispensation, they went about the World, instruc-
 ting and perswading Mankind to embrace the Gos-
 ple; but they used no penal Methods to bring the
 Heathen into their Opinions, tho' they were all
 Idolators. If they had done this, it would have render-
 ed both their Doctrine and their Designs suspected;
 and will any Man say that the Christian Religion
 must be preserved now by such Means, as would
 have been a Sign of Imposture at its first Propagati-
 on, and have Introduced into it since an Antichri-
 stian Power, and all the stale Idolatries of the
Gentiles.

Quest. 11. 'Tis prophesy'd Revel. xvii. 16. *That ten Kings or Nations, who had formerly supported the Whore of Babylon, shall turn against her, make her desolate, naked, and burn her with Fire. Now be pleased to tell me how 'tis imaginable this great Event can be brought about by these Kings or Nations, without something like National Covenanting, especially if they shall attack the Whore all at once, which for any thing I know they may do?*

Quest. 12. *If Ten or rather a greater Number of Independent Congregations, should make an Essay to demolish Antichrist, wou'd they not necessarily be obliged to forefakc their own Principle, and make use of ours, according to the very first Notions of a confederate War?*

Quest. 13. *For what Sort of Allies would they make in this Holy War upon their Independent Principles, without something like our Solemn League to cement them?*

Ans. I have no Skill at unridling Prophecies, but I shall endeavour to set your Argument in a just Light. No Event, it seems, but what is morally good can be foretold in a Scripture Prophecy, and here is one which assures us that Rome shall be converted by Armies; therefore Dragoons are Orthodox Apostles; and since it is impossible they can unite in this glorious Design, without entering into our Solemn League and Covenant: Therefore it is likewise foretold here, that they shall take our Solemn League and Covenant; and therefore the Solemn League and Covenant is a good Covenant, and binding upon us; because it will bind them to destroy the Pope. I hope I have not wrong'd your Reasoning. But was not our Saviour's Death the Event of a sacred Prediction? Did that also
make

make his Murther a holy Conspiracy? And shall we make an obscure Prophecy, of the Manner of the fulfilling of which we are ignorant, an Argument against what is established by the plainest Declarations of the Gospel? A holy War for propagating Religion, is a Contradiction to Christianity. The Turks have their holy Wars. Some Lunatick Expeditions into the Holy Land, to rescue a Grave on Mount *Calvary*, out of the Hands of the *Saracens*, have been called Holy Wars. The Pope by the *Crusado* has raised Holy Wars, for exterminating the Protestant Heresy, and they fetch their Arguments for it from the *Alcoran*, and from the Decrees of the Council of *Trent*, there being nothing in the Gospel to countenance it. And I dare be bold to say, that a Holy War, raised for converting even the Pope himself, whatever Good it might accidentally do in the World, the thing itself would be morally as bad, as these I have just now mentioned. Indeed Religion being our most valuable Privilege, all Men have a Right to defend it, even by War, (when that was necessary) as much as their Civil Liberties; and the Reason of this is, because no Man can have a Right to take it from them by Force, or impose another in its Stead: But an ordinary civil Alliance would serve all the Purposes of such a Defensive War, unless we design to defend our Religion by Way of imposing it, which was the Case of our Forefathers in the Time of the Covenant.

Quest. 14. *Whether the Lords of the Congregation acted an honest and warrantable Part at the Reformation, in openly covenanting against Popery, and all its Abettors, as they did, Edinburgh, December 3. 1557, Perth, May last 1559, Leith, April 12. 1560, Ayr, Sept. 4. 1562?*

Ans.

Ans. A Man may be said to act honestly, when he acts with the Approbation of his Conscience; and I doubt not but this was the Case of these Lords. But they were newly come out of the Darkness of Popery, and did not see the Inconsistency of Covenanting with the Principles of the Reformation, which was brought about in Opposition to all humane Authority in Religion, whereby it is effectually prevented, wherever it is yet wanted, both among Papists and those who are called Protestants. But, if the Engagement entred into by these Lords, was only a defensive civil Alliance (as for ought I know it was, having no History of that Time by me) to preserve themselves from the Persecutions of imposing Papists, and their Covenanting Armies, and to procure a Liberty for Protestants to worship God according to their Consciences, which was unrighteously denied them; if this was their Case, I say, they acted both honestly and warrantably. But it can be no Justification of our Covenants, which were not designed to procure Liberty of Conscience to our selves, but to take it from others, who in Consequence of them, were handled much after the same Way, as these Lords were by the Papists.

Quest. 15. Do not all Casuists own these Oaths and Covenants to be lawful and binding, whose Matter is moral, and Form legal?

Quest. 16. Is not the Matter of the National Covenant moral, necessary, and antecedently binding.

Ans. Every Thing that is moral, is binding on Account of that Morality; but this is no Reason why we should be obliged to swear it, till all Men are agreed in every thing, which Men in Power may take the Fancy to call moral. Humane Authority

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thority is of an encroaching Nature; tho' it may begin plausibly, it soon stretches itself, and grasps at every Thing that won't bow to it. Thus we have seen a Covenant that began with abjuring some of the gross Errors of Popery, followed by a solemn Acknowledgment of publick Sins, wherein *Independents* are class'd together with *Socinians*; and if it had gone successfully on, I make no doubt but the Enemies of Clerical Power wou'd have felt a severer Vengeance, than the Deniers of our Saviour's Divinity. Bad Men, having no Principles, easily swallow any Thing; but these who have the Fear of God can't comply with all Things, which makes them the only Sufferers almost in every Persecution. As for the Morality of our Covenants, I refer to what has been said in the Beginning of this Letter; and much more might be said, were it necessary.

Quest. 17. *Was it not formally and legally gone into, by King, Parliament, Ministers and People of all Ranks, and sworn five or six Times for the more Security?*

Ans. This we are assured of by a miserable Experience of the Divisions it has occasioned in this Land ever since. But I would fain ask, How does this, and many other of your Queries, prove the main Question of the Lawfulness of these Engagements at first? And that other grand Point, which seems to be a darling Article of Belief with some People, that every Man who was born in Scotland since the Year Forty eight, took the Covenant in that Year?

Quest. 18. *What then can disoblige a Protestant Presbyterian Minister, at a Protestant, Presbyterian National Covenant, or a Confession of Faith, original*

is designed to preserve us from all the Mischiefs of Popery and Arbitrary Government?

Ans. Whatever might be the original Design of the Contrivers of the Covenant, it is certain if the Measures had succeeded that began to be taken for its full Establishment, it would have introduced into this Nation Stupidity and implicate Faith, which are the greatest Mischiefs of Popery, and the worst Sort of Slavery, the Slavery of the Mind; nor would that of the Body been wanting, but for the wretch'd Policy of King Charles the First. If he designed (as 'tis said) to make himself absolute, he should have join'd the Covenanters, and given the Clergy what they wanted, an absolute Power in the Church, and they would soon made him the same Complement in the State. Bishop Burnet tells us, this very Method was propos'd by Lauderdale to King Charles the Second, after the Restauration, and would have taken Effect, if it had not been for the unreasonable Fondness of Mr. Sharp to an Archbishoprick, and the Importunities of some others to have Episcopacy settl'd, who deceiv'd the King, and perswaded him the Episcopal Party was strongest. There might be many Instances given of absolute Government successfully establish'd this Way, and that the contrary Method is the only One that can preserve either civil or religious Liberty; and we see in Fact, that this and all other free Governments take effectual Measures to suppress all imposing Power in the Clergy. By this Time I hope you perceive how reasonably a Protestant Presbyterian Minister, may be displeased with a Covenant, that has no Right to the first of these Titles.

Quest. 19. *For what Purpose is the national Covenant and solemn League kept in our Books, and Acts*

Acts of Assembly anent them preserv'd in Reputation, if they be not still valuable Parts of our Constitution?

Ans. It may be either waiting an Opportunity to play the old Game over again, or rather because some Men have a blind Regard to whatever their Ancestors did pretendedly for the Interest of Religion; and because these, who would quarrel it, are discourag'd; when they attempt it.

Quest. 20. Does it look fair then, after one hath got himself into our Communion, to quarrel the Lawfulness of our Covenants, the Breaches whereof are frequently given as Reasons of Fasting and Humiliation before God?

Ans. Did it look fair in Luther to quarrel Popish Indulgences, after he had got himself into the Communion of the Church of Rome. Every Party of Men is fallible, and every Party have done Things that cannot be justify'd; Is a Man then by joining a Party oblig'd to defend all its Errors? Wherever this is made a Term of Communion, it is a plain Declaration, that they design to have no honest Man in their Communion. A frank Acknowledgement of Failings will procure more Respect to the Man that makes it, and reconcile the Minds of other Men to his Party, better than an obstinate Defence of them, and consequently he that acts this Way, acts fairest both for himself and for his Party.

Quest. 21. What Accounts wou'd the Church have made of such a Practice in the Days of Yore?

Ans. It wou'd have been destroy'd by Persecution.

Quest. 22. Is it yet imaginable that the Church, after so long maintaining the Lawfulness of national

Covenanting, will all on a sudden go into the Independent Way of doing Things?

Ans. No truly, it is not to be imagin'd; for whole Churches seldom or never quite old Errors, when they have an Opinion of their own Power, which in this Case is commonly imploy'd for the suppressing of Truth, under the Notion of its being a Reflection on the Church. But tho' whole Churches are unteachable, I hope it is every honest Minister's Duty to instruct private People, and patiently to wait the Fruits of his Labour among them, since even these are not always very suddenly brought in. The Body of the Jewish Church never received the Doctrine of our Saviour and his Apostles, nor did that of *Rome* receive the Reformation; so if the preaching of the Gospel had been delay'd, till the Jewish Church shou'd suddenly embrace it, and the Reformation had waited the Approbation of his Holiness at *Rome*, we had never heard either of the Gospel or of the Reformation; and there is no Doubt that the Apostles and *Luther* in their Turns, were pos'd with such Queries as these by the Pope and the Jewish Priests.

Quest. 23. Is the Zeal, Blood and Treasure spent by our worthy Ancestors, in framing and banding down our Covenants, to be forgot all at once? And must we now reckon no more upon our Martyrs, than as so many Fools and mad Men?

Ans. We can never sufficiently admire that glorious Stand made by our worthy Ancestors against the Tyranny of *Rome*, and the Reformation which by these Means we enjoy; and tho' the great Design of that, the being delivered from the Authority of Men in Religion, was in a fair Way of being disappointed by the Covenants, I'm inclin'd to think

think these were hatch'd out of Ignorance of the true Nature of the Reformation; but this I suppose ought to be no Excuse for us in defending them. Every true Protestant will honour the Memory of these who were Martyrs for the Reformation; and if there was any Body that suffer'd merely for the Covenant, every charitable Man will think, they gave a Demonstration of their Honesty, by shewing that what they thought Truth, was dearer to them than their Lives. But the Mistakes even of Martyrs, are no Arguments of the Truth of Things.

Quest. 24. *Does not the inveighing against our Covenants gratify the Enemies of our happy Establishment, as it does at the same Time grieve the Hearts of its best Friends?*

Ans. The Enemies of our happy Establishment have of late adopted these very Principles which defend our Covenants, and as their Interest will be most effectually ruin'd by preaching them down, I doubt not but they are as heartily vex'd at it as you are. And as for these Friends of our Establishment, whose Hearts are griev'd by it, they are either such who want only to be better instructed, and then their Grief wou'd cease; or they are such who are Friends to it for Interest and Power, or by being born in *Scotland*, of Parents who favour'd it, and wou'd have been Friends to any other Church upon the same Terms, if they had been born in *Turkey*, they would have been Friends to *Mahomet*; and it is owing to the mere Accident of their being born out of *Italy*, that they don't damn us every Year: I hope it is no Crime to grieve these Friends.

Quest. 25. *Do not they who are guilty this Way*
justly

justly deserve to be reckon'd Malignants, according to the first Sense and Use of that Word?

Ans. The Word *Malignant* was us'd to signify a Reproacher of the Reformation, at least it ought to have been thus us'd. Now I leave it to your self to judge, who best deserves this Character, they who reject the Covenants that they may defend the Reformation, or these who defend the Covenants, which is a real Reproach upon the Reformation, as it plainly supposes, that the only Reason why we renounc'd the great Pope at Rome, was that we might set up a Number of smaller Ones among our selves: And I will venture to affirm, that it is impossible for any Man of these Principles, to give a satisfying Reason, why he should not still be of the Communion of that Church.

Quest. 26. What Satisfaction then can a Minister of the Gospel of Peace have in propagating on all Occasions an Opinion, which can't miss to inflame and divide his Mother Church, which with Submission I think were it true, yet wou'd serve for all its Uses, tho' he kept it to himself?

Ans. I may rather ask what Satisfaction can a Minister have in advancing Principles, that wou'd turn the Gospel of Peace into a Gospel of Ambition and Strife, and in proposing Queries, that can have no Efficacy in the present Case, but what wou'd as reasonably have put a Stop to the Gospel itself? That also divided and inflam'd the Jewish Church, and the Reformation inflam'd and divided the Church of Rome; but these Flames and Divisions proceeded neither from the Apostles, nor the Preachers of the Reformation, but from Romish and Jewish Priests. It is the Nature of Truth to appease Heats and Divisions, and not to raise them.

This is always done by the Opposers of Truth; and I dare say, if it was not for this, there wou'd be no Reason of Complaint in the present Case. If the People must not be instructed in the true Grounds of the Reformation, for Fear of dividing the Church, then (with Submission I think) *Luther* might very reasonably have kept the Reformation to himself. But as Ignorance is not the Foundation of Faith in our Church, these then act very inconsistently with its Principles, who wou'd procure Peace to it, by keeping Men ignorant of the true Reasons why they shou'd be at Peace with it. If a Minister sees that the Defence of our Covenants renders the Reformation indefensible, ought he not to instruct his People to drop a favourite Doctrine, rather than leave them to the Hazard of dropping the Reformation? And when he perceives what Ravage these Covenants have made in the Minds of Men, and that many deluded Biggots make the renewing of them a constant Petition in their Prayers, which is in effect, to desire the Almighty to send Confusion and Misery into these Nations, must he sit still untouch'd at these Impieties? Ought he not rather to oppose them, and endeavour to prevent them? And now I have finish'd this Defence; which I undertook, because I thought it necessary, and because I knew Mr. G - - - -s dar'd not. If any Thing in it appears too violent, I hope you will impute it to the Importance of the Matter, and to the Design I had, of shewing you how far the Consequences of your Principles wou'd go, and not to an Intention of making Reflections, the very Appearance of which I wou'd have avoided, if it had been possible. I have not the Vanity to think I can convince you, but I hope you will per-

form that part of your Promise to me, (which you made to Mr. G - - -s) of giving me an Answer to this, which will easily come to my Hand, if you make it as publick as you did your Queries: And as I have not (knowingly I'm sure) neglected any Thing of yours, that look'd like an Argument, I expect the same Observance from you. I am,

Reverend SIR,

Your most humble Servant.



LET-



LETTER II.

SIR,

IN the National Covenant there are References made to several Acts of Parliament, which evidence that it contains an Obligation to use Force and Persecution against all its Opposers. In one Place, all Magistrates, Sheriffs, &c. are ordained to search, apprehend and punish all Contraveeners ; in another Place the King must abolish all false Religion, contrary to the *Covenant* or *Confession of Faith*, and must be careful to root out of his Empire all Hereticks and Enemies to the true Worship of God, who shall be convicted of these Crimes by the true Kirk of God : Now the true Religion or Worship of God is elsewhere said to be the Religion by Law established in this Realm, and we all know that the established Clergy were the true Kirk. This was the Tenor of the Coronation Oath, and these were the Terms of their Allegiance. His Majesty was to defend the true Religion and the true Kirk, that is, he was to allow the Clergy to do what they pleased, and whoever would not obey them. was a Heretick or a Malignant, and all these were to be destroyed.

I don't love to put the worst Construction on any Man's Actions, and I would gladly excuse the

Framers and Promoters of the Covenant, by supposing they did it ignorantly ; otherwise, when they adjured the usurped Authority of the *Roman Antichrist* upon the Scriptures of God, upon the Kirk, the civil Magistrate, and the Consciences of Men, we must think they acted insincerely, and swore Contradictions, or that they did it with a Reservation of the same Authority to themselves ; for, they did exercise the same Authority, in all the foregoing Heads, which I shall endeavour to prove.

First, With Respect to the Civil Magistrate, they laid the King aside from the Exercise of his Royal Power, and would not so much as suffer him to live in one of his own Houses with Freedom and Safety, till he should swear to settle Religion thro' all his Dominions according to the Covenant ; that is, they in Effect deposed him, because he would not consent to deprive every Man, who did not believe in the *General Assembly*, of all the Privileges that belonged to him either as a Subject or a Christian ; because he would not do, what no King on Earth has any Right to do, persecute his Subjects for Opinions that were merely religious, and had no Relation to the Affairs of State ; (for the Magistrates Office extends only to civil Concerns, and to Religion no further than the preserving external Order, and the keeping the different Sects in his Dominions from devouring one another. No more is claimed by our present most Gracious Sovereign, nor was any more claimed by any of our Princes since the Revolution :) The Pope never assumed a greater Power than this over any Magistrate ; Kings that will root out Hereticks, and do every Thing he commands, have his Favour and Approbation ; if they won't do this, he sometimes deposes them ;
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and our Covenanting Clergy did very near the same. But, they went yet further, they had twisted in their religious Opinions with the Civil Authority in such a Way, that all Men who did not embrace these, were by the Covenant made punishable, as Rebels against the Government. In like Manner they jumbled in Religion with every thing that concerned the State, the making of Peace and War, the Disposal of Civil and Military Offices; all was Religion, and the Clergy were the Judges of that, wherefore the Parliament was to do nothing without their Consent. And when they were called upon by the Supreme Court in the Nation, to give Reasons for their intermeddling in these Affairs, they had the Impudence to tell them, That because *Joshua* and the Congregation of *Israel*, were commanded to go out and in at the Word of *Eleazar* the Priest, who had the *Urim* and *Thummim*, therefore our Armies were to go in and out at the Word of the General Assembly, who had no *Urim* and *Thummim*, nor any other Means of consulting God than what all other good Men have. And because *David* made the Testimonies of the Lord his Counsellors, therefore the Parliament was required to make the same use of the Dictates of the Clergy, which in this Case were only the Testimonies of their Pride. This was the Language of our Covenanters in the Year Forty eight : They made Acts of Assembly against Acts of Parliament, they trampled on the Legislative Authority, made them suffer Penance for what they had done in that Capacity, and erected a more exorbitant Power, than was ever claimed by the *Roman* Antichrist over his Vassal States, to whom he still leaves the Management of their own Concerns.

No Man can usurp an Authority over the Scriptures, but by fixing upon them what meaning he pleases, nor upon the Church, but by forcing them to believe that Meaning. This is what the Pope does, and it gives such full Security to his Pride and Power, that his taking the Bible out of the Hands of the People seems to be an unnecessary Precaution ; for when humane Penalties are made the Rule of Understanding it, a Man has the use of it as little as if he had never seen it. Now the peculiar Tenets of our Clergy were their Sense of the Scripture, and every Man was obliged to receive and swear these, or he was punished for refusing.

As for the Consciences of Men, no earthly Power can force the inward Motions of the Mind ; these are only subject to God. All that the Pope himself can do, if they have not Grace to suffer, is to force from them by Punishment a Profession of what they abhor, whereby the Pride of Men is indeed gratify'd, but at the same Time it affronts and dishonours God, who is pleased only with a reasonable Service. 'Tis plain our Covenanters had no Regard to Conscience, every Man must swear, and let his Scruples be ever so conscientious, they were answered with Penalties, or a sham Instruction limited to a certain Time, and if he was not converted against the Day, he was first delivered to Satan, and then into the Hands of the Magistrate. The Clergy were so careful to fortify themselves in Darkness, that no Man dared speak, or write, or read any thing that opposed their Designs ; the very Means of Information were taken away, Coast Towns were searched, to prevent the Importation of Books, that the smallest Ray of Light might not shine in upon
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their deluded Followers. Was not all this copy'd from the *Roman* Antichrist? Was not this the very Power which they abjured, and which was warranted by that same Covenant, in which it was abjured? 'Tis true Popish Punishments are greater in Degree, but this makes no Difference in the Thing it self; for if Persecution may be lawfully used in Propagating Religion, then the Inquisition is the most Christian Method that has been hitherto invented, because it has most effectually promoted Uniformity and Church Power, which is the Design of all Persecution.

I see no Reason (for my Part) why our Covenanters shou'd have dissolv'd that Uniformity, which was established before the Reformation, and was more universal, and better fortify'd than the new One, which they were erecting. All *Europe* was bless'd with a peaceful and uniform Stupidity, and the Clergy enjoy'd an uncontroul'd Dominion; and if the Covenanters had found no Interruption in their Progress, this Nation had very soon been reduc'd to the same State, besides that it was little better at first. Force is the genuine Method of propagating Error, but it debases Truth, and changes it into the Nature of Error, by maintaining it in Unrighteousness. Truth when receiv'd for the avoiding of worldly Penalties, has no better Effect upon the Minds of Men than Error; nor can the Belief of it in that Case, make them better Men than if they did not believe it, or believ'd the contrary: And if we can suppose a truly religious Man, may be influenc'd in his religious Practice by outward Force, then in so far as he is thus influenc'd, his Religion does not deserve that Name; which

which shews that a true Religion, propagated by humane Force, is no better than a false One; and consequently that our Reformation, by a covenanted Perfection, was little better than if we had not been reform'd. But if there is any Odds in this Case, I may safely affirm, that a few Scores of Years wou'd have remov'd that Difference, if the Design of the Covenants had been carry'd on with Success. The Use of Force was a Warning to the People, to know nothing that might offend the Clergy, nor to believe any Thing except they commanded it, and wou'd have taught them by Degrees to seek no other Reasons for their Religion: The Advantage of Ignorance wou'd have soon been found out, as it preserv'd them from Trouble, by rendering them incapable of contradicting the Clergy, and willing to say any Thing after them: True divine Knowledge wou'd have grown out of Request, humane Compulsion wou'd have superceded the Motives and Grace of the Gospel, and have introduc'd a barbarous Stupidity, which is the Mother of all forc'd Devotion: The Clergy having destroy'd all their Enemies, and having no Body to oppose or rival them, wou'd have grown first Lazy, and that Laziness wou'd have likewise improv'd into Ignorance; and so these blind Leaders, and their blind Followers, wou'd have both fallen into the Ditch together.

There is no Doubt, that Divisions and even Heresies among Christians, excite Men to a more diligent Study of the Scriptures, and consequently make the Truth better understood than if there had been no such Divisions; and if I may be permitted to make a Conjecture of the Designs of Providence, I wou'd think that this is one Reason why it is so frequently said in holy Writ, that these

must

must come. It is certain that Ignorance is always the Effect of Uniformity, and is always dispelled in Proportion to the Breach of that Uniformity. In *Germany* and *France*, where there are many Protestants, the Clergy are generally more learn'd than in other Popish Countries, where there are fewer, or no Protestants; and the People have still some Remains of common Sense, and believe in our Saviour, as well as in the Virgin *Mary* and dead Men; but in *Spain* and *Italy*, where Uniformity and the Inquisition prevail, the Saints have rob'd our Saviour of all Honour, the Clergy are Stupid and Vitious, and the common People are but a little remov'd from the Condition of Brutes. How ignorant were most of the Clergy and People of *England*, a While after the Restoration, when Conformity was at its Height? Wou'd not this have been our own Case, if the Covenants had been carry'd on with a full Swing? And who knows but in Process of Time, we might have been delivered over into the Hands of some infallible *Jumo*, or universal Superintendent, who might have thought it for the Honour of the living Clergy, to worship dead Ones, or perhaps the tatter'd Remains of the old *Genevan* Cloak of some primitive Trumpeter of Church Power. The baptizing of Bells and Church-yards, might have once more come in Repute, with an endless Train of other Monkish Fooleries, to rivet the Chains of Darkness upon the Minds of the besotted People.

While I have consider'd this, I have sometimes thought, that all the Misery we suffered after the Restoration (from the Fury of others, who follow'd the Example we had set them) was a Mercy to these Nations, as it put a final Period to National Covenanting, and all its dismal Consequences; but especially as it was follow'd by the late happy

happy Revolution, and the present mild Establishment of our Church, which is founded on the Principles of Liberty, and discountenances all religious Force. And I wou'd have it carefully observ'd, that the Principles laid down in these Letters, are mainly design'd to condemn the Practices of former Times, when the Covenants were in Agitation, and can have no bad Effect on this Establishment, which I may shew perhaps more fully sometime afterward. Nor do I design any Reflection on our present Clergy, many of which I know are in the Interest of Liberty, and as they have not the Means of Persecution, ~~so~~ they inwardly abhor it; but if there are any gloomy Spirits among us, who practise Persecution in *Theory*, and long for an Opportunity of exerting their Anger and Pride, and of bringing upon us an Antichristian Slavery; I own what I have said is applicable to them, and I desire they may consider it as directed against themselves.

What I have said in this, will clear some things, at which I only hinted in my former Letter. If you think it worth while to make a Reply, I hope you will not do it by calling me Names, or by making queer Jest, except in a Way of sound Reasoning. I expect you will enter into the Merits of the Cause, and prove that the Covenants, as they were managed, were either consistent with the Gospel, with the Principles of the Reformation, or with the Safety of the State: Or, if they were inconsistent with all these, and with every thing else, except the Power and Pride of Church-men, then you must prove that they ought notwithstanding to be preserved in Reputation, and that it is the Duty of the People to believe them consistent with all these; that

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is, you must prove that the People are obliged to believe Contradictions, and that it is a Crime to discover their Folly. Which if you do, I promise to be as zealous a Covenanter as your self. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble Servant.

N. B. I have asserted nothing here, but what is vouched by the Covenant itself, and the Acts of Assembly from the Year 1638 to the Year 1649, printed in the Year 1682; and I desire any Man who wants to be satisfied of my Fidelity, to look at the following Pages, (51. 59, 60, 119, 120, 162, 192, 193, 220, 224, 354, 355, 367, 374, 376, 377, 378, 390, 398, 401, 402, 403, 404, 460, 461, 462, &c.) and compare them with the History of that Time.



LET



LETTER III.

S I R,

THE *Jews* were the People of God in a peculiar Sense; he separated them from the other Nations of the World, he modell'd their Civil State, and appointed their Judicial Laws by an immediate Act; and, because they were of a stubborn Disposition, he gave them a Religion suitable to it, a Religion of external Ceremonies, which was incorporated with their Civil Constitution, and made a Condition of their possessing the Land of *Canaan*: No Man could enjoy the Privileges of the *Jewish* State without observing it; it was enforced by Punishments to be inflicted by the Magistrate, and the Design of it was, to keep that People from mixing with other Nations. From hence it appears, that the Ceremonial Law was only a Political Religion, peculiar to the *Jews* in a National Capacity. True Religion, or Religion properly so called, which was signified by these Ceremonies, was the same with them as it was with us, with this Difference, that we have a clearer Revelation. It was not the Religion of the *Jewish* Nation, but of particular Men in it; nor was it subject to the Cognizance of the Civil

Civil Magistrate ; Grace was not effected by humane Penalties then, any more than it is now.

This Observation will lead us to make a true Judgment of the Nature of the *Jewish* Covenants, which were made for the Reformation of Religion, not in the proper Sense of it, but of that Religion which was Political and Ceremonial. The Covenant made by *Josiah* † was of this Sort, he bound himself to *walk after the Lord, to keep his Testimonies, and to perform the Covenant written in the Book of Moses* : All which Words imply only an external Observance of the *Mosaical* Law ; for he caused all that were present to stand to this Covenant, and made them to serve the Lord their God ; that is, he obliged them to adhere to what they had promised, namely, to the external Service of God commanded in the Law. No other cou'd be effected by *Josiah*, he could not renew their Hearts, and make them inwardly Religious ; he had not the Power of dispensing Divine Grace. If he could have done this, their Obedience had not terminated with his Reign ; all his Days they departed not from following the Lord ; but in the succeeding bad Reigns these same Men departed from it, and yet during the Life of *Josiah* they performed their Covenant, all the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem* did according to the Covenant of God. Which is a Demonstration that the Design of this Covenant was only a Political Reformation, and that the Duties therein promised were only external.

*King Asa gathered all Judah and Benjamin together at Jerusalem, and they entred into a Covenant * to seek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their Heart and with all their Soul ; that whosoever*
would

would not seek the Lord God of Israel, should be put to Death, whether Man or Woman. The Phrase to seek the Lord God with all their Heart and Soul, can import no more in this Place, but that they were fully determined to observe the *Mosaical* Law, and perform the external Service therein required with a scrupulous Exactness. It cannot be meant of that inward Service, which was typified in the Law; if every Man and Woman had been put to Death, who did not serve God in this Sense, the far greater Part of the Congregation had been destroy'd; But they could not do this; for the Want of inward Sincerity, which is the Effect of Grace, had no civil Punishments annexed to it in the *Jewish* Law, nor could these have been executed, because they could not see into one another's Hearts. All the People of *Judah* performed this Covenant, they sought the Lord with their whole Desire; but they were not all sincerely good, they were not at all in a State of Salvation; there were certainly some bad Men among them, yet these performed the Covenant as well as the others, which shews that it only bound them to be hearty in the external Service of God: Upon this the Lord was found of them and gave them rest round about, which was a Promise made by him to the external Observance of their Law.

After the Captivity *Ezra* made a Covenant † for reforming an Abuse of one of their judicial Laws, anent marrying strange Wives. The Design of *Hezekiah's* Covenant ‖ was to turn away the fierce Wrath of God, whereby their Fathers had fallen by the Sword, and their Sons, Wives and Daughters were in Captivity, which proves it to have relat-

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† *Ezra* x. 3, 5, 8. ‖ 2 *Chron.* xxix. 9, 10.

ed only to the external *Jewish* Law, this being the temporal Punishment threatened by God upon the Breach of it. And that all the *Jewish* Covenants were of this kind will be evident, I believe, to any Man who considers the Nature of that Dispensation. They seem to be civil Acts of Indemnity; the ceremonial Law was engross'd with the civil Law of the *Jews*, the Neglect of it was a Forfeiture of their civil Privileges, which they generally fell into, during the Reigns of their bad Kings; and therefore their good Kings, when they relaxed the Punishment, they did it on Condition of their giving Security upon Oath, for their observing it in Time coming, and they were commonly called together for this End, these who refused this Condition, or were excluded from the Benefit of it, the Laws were put in Execution against them, of which we have some Instances in the History of the Old Testament.

Nothing of all this may be lawfully imitated by Christians, with respect to their Religion, which will be manifest, by comparing it with the Religion of the *Jews*, from which it differs in all these Points, which made National Covenanting the Duty of that People. One great Design of the ceremonial Law, was to preserve them separate from other Nations; for this End it was made their National Religion, that is, it was taken into their National Constitution, made a Condition of enjoying their civil Privileges, and fortify'd by civil Laws, to be put in Execution by the Magistrate, who was authorized thereunto by a particular Command of God. But the Christian Religion is no Badge of Distinction of one Nation from another. It was designed for Men of all Nations but; not to be a National Religion, not to be engrossed with, or
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made a Part of any civil Constitution, nor a Condition of enjoying the Privileges of any civil State. It is a Kingdom which is not of this World, its Reward and Punishments are of the same Nature with itself; the Princes of this World are not entrusted with the Execution of its Laws, nor have they any Divine Command to justify them in pretending to support it by Laws and Penalties of their own; every Act of this Nature committed by them, is an Act of Violence and Usurpation, being an Act for which they have no Authority by Virtue of their Office; for a Magistrate can have no Power but what he receives from the Consent of his Subjects, and every Man's Religion being inseparable from himself, Subjects can transfer no Power over their Religion to the Magistrate: And when Magistrates have assumed this Power, on Pretence of promoting the Interests of Religion, it has had a very different Effect, and in most Cases has quite destroyed it; in so much that in many Kingdoms, where this is practis'd, there is scarce a Trace left of the Religion of Jesus Christ, and that venerable Name is only retained to countenance the most abominable Idolatry: So successful has the pretended Favour of Princes been in ruining Christianity, beyond what their declared Enmity could ever do, under which it always flourished and gained Ground. And in other Kingdoms where the Case has not been quite so bad, what Advantage has true Religion received by these Methods? The peculiar Tenets of one Sect of Christians have been promoted in Opposition to other Sects; the favourite Notions of a Court, or a domineering Clergy, have been forced upon Men by civil Punishments; Conscience has been violated in behalf of Religion, Oppression

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recommended as the Service of God, and Bitterness of Spirit, and implicable Hatred have been sanctified by the Name of Zeal for the Gospel. Religion may indeed subsist for some Time, in a wounded Condition, amidst all this Confusion ; but the smallest Attempts to promote it this Way, lay a Foundation for its utter Destruction, and in the End will accomplish it, and in the mean time justify all the Barbarities that have been acted on this Account, in being as reasonable to burn a Man, as to fine him, in order to make him a Christian.

National Covenanting can have no other Effect, but the external Compliance of that Nation where it is practised, with that Religion to which it is apply'd. An external Compliance with the Law of *Moses* was of great Advantage to the *Jews*, it had many temporal Promises annexed to it, particularly that of a peaceable Possession of the Land of *Canaan* ; and being their National Religion, National Covenanting was a very proper Method for promoting it. But, when it is applied to Christianity, it either ruins or endangers it, and at best only promotes a more outward hypocritical Profession, which Character has no Blessing entailed upon it in the Gospel. The Christian Religion is of a spiritual Nature, it is the Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth. The *Jews* themselves never dream'd that Religion in this Sense could be promoted by their National Covenants ; and therefore the National Covenants of Christians can be no Imitation of theirs in this Sense, and we have no Command in the New Testament, enjoining them as Means of Promoting Religion, either in this or in any other Sense.

From what has been said, we may easily determine what Sentiments we ought to entertain of

that National Covenant, which was sometime ago, imposed upon this Kingdom, by the Men who at that Time had the Power in Church and State. It was designed to establish a National Religion, a Religion guarded by penal Statutes and Acts of Parliament, to a Multitude of which it refers, and was in all Respects an exact Imitation of the *Jewish* Covenants. But this is so far from justifying it, that for this very Reason it is condemned, as inconsistent with the Nature and Design of the Gospel, and with the Principles of civil Government, in respect of which, it was Tyranny, or the Exercise of Power without Right. But it is said that this National Covenant was necessary for the Reformation of Religion; and because this is a very Popular Pre-
tence, I shall consider it particularly. And,

1. It cou'd not be necessary for a Reformation of the Christian Religion, which can only be promoted by Methods consistent with itself, and not by such as are a Contradiction to it, as this is already prov'd to have been.

2. The Reformation, for which this Covenant is said to be necessary, was a Reformation from Popery, which is a Heap of such glaring Absurdities, as wou'd never have been received or retained among Men, with any general Consent, without the Support of National Laws, and National Penalties: This Covenant therefore, which was founded upon, and promoted by the like Laws and Penalties, was not a Reformation from Popery, but a Continuation of the old Power in different Hands: The Superstructure was indeed thrown down, but the Foundation of all that Corruption still remained, upon which it might have been easily built anew, or something as bad in its Stead.

3. If

3. If Men in Power have a Right to establish Religion by National Laws, and National Penalties (and they must have this Right, if our National Covenant was lawful) then there will be an End of all Reformation, except what is authorised by these Rulers or Men in Power, and particularly our Reformation, which was made in Opposition to Authority, must be unlawful upon this Supposition: For, if our Rulers in the Time of the Covenant had a Right to command and force the Nation to embrace Presbytery, our Rulers at the Reformation had the same Right to command and force them to retain Popery; and a Right to command, and the Duty of Submission being reciprocal, if it was the Duty of the Nation to submit to Presbytery in the one Case, it was likewise their Duty to submit to Popery in the other Case; so that this Covenant is so far from being necessary for Reformation, that every Step taken in it condemns the Reformation, and charges our Reformers with the Guilt of Rebellion, and Opposition to lawful Authority. But,

4. Authority in this Case is not lawful. No Man can have a Power over the Religion of another Man, and when any Man assumes this Power, he commits an Act of Violence, and gives that other Man a Right of Defence against him, every Man having a Right to defend that, which no Man has a Right to take from him. When a Reformation of Religion is already begun, and has got some Footing, if the Professors of that Religion, from which the Reformation is made, deny the Reformed the free Exercise of their Religion, and endeavour by War, or other Methods of Violence, to

bring them back to the old Religion ; in that Case, a Defence of that Reformation becomes necessary, and it is lawful to return Violence with Violence. This Necessity of Defence arises from the unjust Violence used by the Enemies of Reformation, and not from the Nature of the Reformation itself, which might otherwise be carry'd on without it, and the Design of it is, not to promote or propagate Reformation, but to preserve that which is already made.

5. When a Defence of Religion is undertaken upon just Grounds, a Miscarriage in it being of dangerous Consequence, it may be expedient and necessary for these who are engag'd in it, to have Security of each other's Fidelity ; for this End they may lawfully enter into an Association, to support and assist one another in this Defence. You may call this a Covenant if you please, (I have no Quarrel at the Word, when it is used in a good Sense) but it is a *Civil Covenant*. Religion is defended in the same Way, and for the same Reasons, that the other Rights of Mankind are defended : Associations for defending these Rights are, or ought to be, of the same Nature in all Cases ; the Action to which they bind is hostile Defence, which is a *Civil Action*, and not an Ecclesiastical or Religious one. It is not the Action of a Church, or a Worshiping Assembly, which has nothing to do with War and Arms, but of Men in *Civil Society*, or of Men associated for mutual Protection. The *Covenants*, or *Bonds* entred into by our Reformers before the Year 1560 were of this Kind ; they were Civil Associations, for defending themselves in the Profession and free Exercise of their Re-

Religion, against the Fury of their Rulers, who had no Right to disturb them on that Account: And it had been happy for this Nation, if other Covenants of a different Nature had not been gone into after that Time: But the *National Covenant* and *Solemn League* were as different from these, both in their Nature and in their Effects, as the Exercise of Tyranny is from the Defence of Liberty, and the Spirit of Popery from that of the Gospel.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

P. S. I asserted in my first Letter, that the Apostolical Creed was not known during the three first Centuries. This I did upon the Authority of Sir Peter King, who has enquired into the Transactions of that Time, with an Accuracy beyond any Man I know. But it is the same thing to me whether this is a Mistake or not; because I know not for what End Creeds and Confessions are brought into this Controversy, unless it be to perplex it. For this Reason I wav'd the Consideration of them, and gave a very blunt Answer to your Eight Query, which has given some People Occasion to say, that I wholly condemn'd them. But the plain Meaning of that Answer is this, " Since " *National Covenanting* and *Confessions of Faith*, and " *National Covenanting* is plainly unlawful, what will " you make of the other? " That is, you must own that Confessions are unlawful. Not that I think so of them, for I think there are several essential

Differences betwixt them, and that Confessions may be used in some Cases, in a Consistency both with the Gospel and with the Rights of Mankind : But I did not design to enter into a Detail of these Differences at that Time, nor will I be at Pains to do it now ; but I still " Leave it upon you to answer or explain this Query your self." I leave you to shew the Agreement between National Covenanting and Confessions of Faith ; and when you have prov'd this, I leave you to shew what Service you will do thereby, either to these Confessions, or to any Church that uses them. For my self, I asserted in that same Letter, that " the primitive Christians had some brief Forms, or *Confessions*, and " that these were absolutely necessary to express their " Profession of Christianity ; " And I still assert, that without something of this Nature, I don't see but that a Protestant Congregation may be obliged to receive one of the Disciples of *Loyola* or *St. Dominick* to officiate in their Assemblies.





A REVIEW of the foregoing Letters, &c.

S I. R,

FEW believe it is any Man's Duty to be altogether a Sceptic, or undetermined in Religion; but rather that he ought to fix and declare his Opinion, upon rational Evidence and Conviction. A Man's changing his Religion, as he does his Clothes, may bring him for some Time under the good Opinion of those he joins, but can never give him a settled Reputation among good Men. And to be sure, by a much greater Parity of Reason, any Society or Body of Men may declare their Opinion, and so far fix them by the Word of God, as to exclude all other Doctrines and the Favourers of them from being of their Body or Communion, which is all I mean by the first Query. If I have a natural and inherent Right enforced by a Divine Precept to *prove all Things, and hold fast that which is Good*, and when in the Use of proper Means I come to be confirmed in a certain Scheme of Religion, which I think agreeable to the Holy Scripture, may I not per-

personally covenant with God, that thro' his Grace I shall adhere to it all the Days of my Life, otherwise I shall be in a continual Uncertainty, both about the End of my Faith, and the Salvation of my Soul? Can it be any Fault then in a Society of Men, who have come by the like Enquiry to have the same Sentiments and Way of thinking about Religion, to make an open Declaration of this to the World, when they believe what our Saviour says, *Mark viii. 38: Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, him shall the Son of Man be ashamed of when he comes in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels?* For however some few begin to expose the Lawfulness of National Covenanting; yet it is plain and obvious in Fact, that Men, as well as other Creatures, naturally flock together, in Time of publick Danger, and act in Concert for preserving their Lives and Liberties. And I have yet the Charity to think, that if the Conduct of the Civil Power were going against the Truth of Religion, either in Whole or any main Article of it (as blest'd be God it is not) these in this Corner, who have of late shown their Displeasure at our National Covenants, would heartily renew them for preserving their holy Religion. For when Men distinguish themselves by their Zeal in a private Capacity, I can never bring my self to think, they would have the Face to refuse a publick Declaration of their Faith, especially in such Times and Circumstances, as our worthy Ancestors covenanted in. After all it must be confessed, that no Man can be bound to a blind Submission, unless we suppose an Infallibility to be in the Church: Yet private Men owe a due Respect to publick Deeds and Decisions, when decently made. They

They ought to distrust their own Judgment, and examine the Matter thoroughly. But if they are still convinced that they are in the Right, they are certainly bound to persist in their own Thoughts; only they ought to oppose modestly, and mind what the Apostle says, *If thou hast Faith, have it to thy self.* They should certainly consider well the Importance of Order and Peace, and whether their Opinion, if true, is worth the Noise that may be made about it, or the Disorders that may follow upon it. If these Things had been duly adverted to by some, our Covenants might have lyen dormant in our Books, till they had undergone the common Fate of all humane Transactions. But since their Rest is unmannerly disturbed, I have a great mind to use my low Interest and Talents, to procure them Civil Usage; and I doubt not of the Concurrence of all the true Sons of the Church. 'Tis a little surprizing I own, to think how this Argument falls to my Share; yet I must say, it would raise the Spirits and Indignation of a cooler Constitution than mine yet is, to hear one of the valuable Branches of our Reformation harangued and scribled against by Men of our own Communion.

However I have no further Design just now, than to consider the Lawfulness of National Covenanting for Reformation. As to the binding Obligation of our Covenants (as such) upon Posterity, with some other Formalities about the last of them, I shall leave to a hearty Covenanter, just now writing upon that Subject, who I dare say, will be surpris'd to find me so far on his Side of the Question.

If I mistake it not, this Controversy will be new among Church Men in *Scotland*. For tho' the

Enemies of our Covenants have attacked their Matter and Form; yet they have always own'd the Lawfulness of National Covenanting in General. But now we have got a Set of Men, who, it seems, have a Mind to go roundly to Work, by sapping the Foundation itself, which must be own'd to be the surest Way of doing; yet, if they happen to fail in the main Design, their own Friends in the Issue will give them no Thanks for their bold Attempts.

I shall lay before them very plainly, what I take to be the Sense of the Jewish and Christian Church in this Matter, and if that does not convince them, I must leave them where I found them.

First, With Respect to the Jewish Church, I find them frequently Covenanting, to promote Reformation, where my Surveyer will not so much as imagine they are renewing the Covenant made with Abraham, since they visibly do it by the Lump and in Gross, as a Body and Society of Men under one Law: Neither do I expect that he'll make the same Account of these Covenants, which the Author of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity* does of the *Sinai* Dispensation, that they were new Editions of the Covenant of *Works*; but that rather he'll allow (which is all I ask of him) that they were publick Deeds, testifying their Adherence to the Service of the Living and True God. Every Body that reads the Jewish History must own, that they were distinguished from all other Nations, by a Train of surprising, and sometimes miraculous Providences, of which they frequently made but indifferent Improvement: Yet when, by the Grace of God, they came to get a Sense of their Sins, we see them, through the whole State of their Church, mak-

making the most solemn and open Acknowledgements imaginable, and seldom missing with these to join as solemn Covenants for Reformation, which one wou'd think was but both natural and reasonable, considering how kind God had been to them; and that there is no punishing or rewarding Societies of Men as such in another World. But more especially when they were bound to it, by the first Commandment, which I reckon not only requires private Men, but likewise all the Corporations and Societies of the World to *know and acknowledge God, to be the true God, and their God, and to worship him accordingly.* What then can be the Harm of taking Ten thousand thousand Subscriptions to this blest Acknowledgement? Is it unlawful for Men in Publick to declare and subscribe their private Sentiments, when they are called to it, for honouring God, and securing their Religion? Don't we see all Bodies of Men going together and asserting their common Rights, when they think them infringed? And shall Christian Societies only want this Privilege? Wou'd not this for ever bring them under the Power and Management of the Civil Government, and at Length perhaps extinguish the Difference betwixt Articles of Faith and Acts of Parliament.

The Jewish Covenants I named in 9th Query, you have 2 Kings xi. 17. 2 Chron. xv. 12. xxix. 10. xxxiv. 3. In the first Text 'tis said, *That Jehoiada made a Covenant between the Lord and the King, and the People, that they should be the Lord's People.* Which was plainly no more than what they were formerly bound to, by virtue of the first and second Commandments, which were promulgate to them in a National Capacity; and I hope this

not

not come to that Time of Day yet, to dispute the Morality or binding Obligation of the Decalogue: And that this Covenant, in all its Solemnities, was compleat and concluded, when they vouched, as 'tis called in the Parallel Texts, *the Lord to be their God*, appears by what follows in the same Verse, *viz. That Jehoiada made a Covenant also between the King and the People*; that is, as all Commentators own, a Civil Covenant, whereby the King engaged himself to rule them justly and in the Fear of God, and the People obliged themselves to defend and obey him, as they did, *2 Sam. v. 3*. Now I reckon it was by virtue of this Civil Transaction between the King and the People that *Baal's* Priests, and other obstinate Idolaters were killed, and not by any sacred Covenant, as my Friend inadvertently, I dare say alledges. And that which convinceth me, that I have hit right, in accounting for these Jewish Practices is, that I find a Law given to that People, *Deut. vii. 2*. even before they enter'd *Canaan*, whereby they were obliged utterly to destroy the Enemies of their Religion, which no doubt laid the Foundation, and was the Rule of their After-managements. This I own was peculiar to the Jewish State, and ought never to be imitated by any Church, without a new Revelation from Heaven. Yet as every unbyassed Person must see that these extraordinary Jewish Practices, were no Parts of their National Covenant; so they can never hinder them from being imitated in their natural and moral Constitution, otherwise we should have but little Use for a great Part of the Old Testament.

But that no Body may entertain frightful Ideas of the Jewish Cruelty in destroying Idolaters, or rather

rather that their doing so was no Ingredient in their National Covenanting, I shall a little consider that famous One of them we have recorded *Josbua* xxiv. where among other Things, we distinctly see every Man (as the Text says) going Home to his own Inheritance, without any Thing like Blood-shed among them: For *Josbua* having in the 14 v. exhorted the *Israelites* to publick Reformation, which I take, by what followed upon it, to be equivalent to National Covenanting; he tells them, that he and his Family were resolved to go before them in this solemn Duty; and from one Thing to another, we find the whole Community are engaged: And so 'tis said, v. 25. *Josbua made a Covenant with the People that Day, and set them a Statute and an Ordinance in Shechem*; that is, as 'tis commonly understood, *Josbua* established this Covenant with the People, to bind them and their Posterity to God for ever, as his Statutes and Ordinances naturally do. And further, you see in the next v. this Covenant was write in the Book of God's Law that was put in the Ark, and a Stone set up where it was made, to keep it in Memory to all Generations; and probably, as some of the Learned say, the Covenant it self was engraven on this Monument, as was then usual, which tho' we cannot now produce to our Anticovenanters, yet, blessed be God, the Book is to the Fore, where we have this and the other Jewish Covenants honourably mentioned, as being gone into with Divine Approbation, and recommended for Imitation to latest Posterity. And no Wonder, since whatever Peculiarities the *Jews* were under during their *Theocracy*, yet the general Rules of Morality and Society are eternally the same; and

Men

Men may as well say, we are not reasonable and sensible Creatures; as to tell us, we have not Power to secure our Religion by Contract or Covenant, when it is in Danger.

Besides, these Jewish Covenants gone into for Reformation, which plainly shews them to be Moral, tho' the Observance of the Ceremonial Law was a Part of the Matter of them, there are a great many Old Testament Prophecies anent National Covenanting, which visibly relate to Gospel Times, such as *Jer.* l. 4, 5. *Isa.* ii. 2, 3. *Micah* iv. 1, 2. *Zeph.* viii. 20. *Isa.* xlv. 5. Now he must be an obstinate Christian, and a worse Presbyterian, who will not allow these Prophecies to have had some Part of their Accomplishment in most of the Protestant Churches, by their Way of reforming from Popery.

I have insisted the more copiously upon their Jewish Covenants, because I reckon the Story now in Agitation, turns much upon their being lawful and imitable; and to press this Home, I hope it will be allowed, that the *Maccabees* understood the Jewish Constitution, at least as well as some of our modern Divines do. Now if we happen to find them copying over the Jewish National Covenants, it will make a tolerable Presumption that they understood them, as being originally designed for Imitation; and to make this Good, I'll use the Freedom to trouble my Friend with the following Swatch of my Apocryphal Reading.

Every Body knows, that the *Jews* became the Subjects of the Kings of *Babylon* by the entire Conquest which *Nebuchadnezar* made of that Nation; and that from one Hand to another, they fell at length to the Share of the Kings of *Syria*.
They

They proved hard Matters to them. *Antiochus Epiphanes* robbed and defiled their Temple, discharging them the Exercise of their Religion. Upon which *Mattathias*, the first of the *Maccabees*, or Princes of Religion, convened his five Sons, with all the *Jews* that would follow them, and went into a Desert, where they entered into a Solemn League, to defend their Law, and to give their Lives for the Covenant of their Fathers; as the Text expressly bears *Macc. v. 50 - - - 68*, and *Josephus's* History more fully. *Page 315*. And tho' this Story, as it stands in the *Apocrypha*, and narrated by *Josephus*, does not make a full Proof of the Lawfulness of National Covenanting; yet I hope, when it is referred to with Divine Approbation, as plainly it is *Dan. xi. 31, 32, 33, 34*, the Argument is convincing.

My next Argument for the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, I am afraid brings me under something like a Shew of Learning, to which every Body knows I have but very ordinary Pretensions. Yet seeing my Surveyer, with an Air of Assurance, tells me, in Answer to *Query 6th*, "That the primitive Christians were altogether ignorant of Covenanting, that modern Engine of Power?" As if they had forgot the Covenant of Grace among the Rest. In this Situation, I hope I may be allowed to quote a Father or two, at the second Hand, to support my Opinion: And the rather that my Friend deals plentifully in Primitive History, without putting himself to the Trouble to give any Thing like a Voucher. As for Instance, he tells me, "the Apostolical Creed was not known during the three first Centuries." Whereas *Dr. Hammond on Fundamentals*, Chap. 8. *Dr. Pearson on the Creed*,
D *Nicolson*

Nicollson on the Catechism Pages, 21, 22, 23, maintain, that the Apostles themselves composed it, before they dispersed and went abroad to preach the Gospel; and that each of them put in his own Article (for it visibly consists of 12 Propositions) and then they all voted it, as a Christian Formulary or Confession of Faith, till the Canon of the Scriptures was compleat. If this be Fact, here was something like very early Covenanting, even among the Apostles themselves.

But whatever there be of this, *Leigh* in his Body of Divinity, Page 522 tells me, "That *Ireneus*, who died *anno Christi* 189, and of his Age 90, calls the "Apostles Creed an Apostolical Tradition," which says plainly he saw it, and that it was in Being when he lived; contrary to my Friend's bold Assertion, that it was not known during the three first Centuries. But since I have made a Shift to know a little of this Father's Life, I'll use the Freedom to tell a Story of him, which I have from *J. S.* in his *Eccl. Epit.* Page 58, "When he was Bishop at "Lyons in France, he brought his Congregation "under a solemn Bond to adhere unto Christianity, not only in Opposition to Heathenism, but "likewise to the many Sects and Heresies which "then prevailed, and wrote to the neighbouring "Bishops to do the same; of which Engagement "he minds some of his Friends, when they're going together to Martyrdom." So that this Father looks as like an old *Scotish* Covenanter, as any thing I can imagine.

Bishop *Burnet* tells us in his Exposition of the *Articles of the Church of England*, Page 2, "That "in the first Ages of the Church, every new Bishop "saw round him the Profession of his Faith, as it

" was

“ was fixed in his own Church, and when the
 “ neighbouring Bishops were satisfied with its Or-
 “ thodoxy, they held Communion with him.” And
 indeed without some such Cement as this, which
 looks very like Covenanting, 'tis not imaginable
 how the Christian Church could have survived so
 many cruel Persecutions. That all the Fathers in
 the purest Ages of the Church confirmed their Pro-
 selytes, by bringing them under solemn Vows and
 Engagements, even before the Congregation, to ad-
 here unto the Profession and Practice of Christiani-
 ty, is as certain as any Thing of that kind can be.
Tertullian, I am told, calls the Apostles Creed, *the*
only immoveable and unrefractable Bond of Faith.
Augustine (*Ep. ad Dardanum*) calls it, *The Rule*
common to Great and Small. *Baronius* says, 'tis
basis & fundamentum structuræ ecclesiasticæ. And as
 'tis the only Creed in which all the Churches of the
 World agree, so in most of them it is publicly
 profest and sworn to, even to this every Day. But as
 my Friend, by his Principle, cannot be much in
 love with Creeds, so that Article of ours about
 the Comunion of Saints, I dare say, does not go so
 well down with him, especially as it is explained
 by our *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 26, which smells
 a little of the old League.

So much for the Creed. But now that I have got
 among the Fathers, where few of my Acquaintances
 would expect to find me, if I shall make it appear,
 that even Christianity it self became the legal and
 authorized Religion of the *Roman Empire*, by some-
 thing like National Covenanting, my Surveyer
 himself will reckon I am improving in Church Hi-
 story.

Have at it then. After *Constantine* and *Licinius*

had given out those Edicts at *Milan*, by which the Christians had full Liberty, both for their Belief and Worship, *Licinius* being still an Enemy to that Religion in his Heart, began in the Year 319 to persecute the Christians, and from one Thing to another committed the utmost Cruelty and Barbarity among them. Whereupon the Bishops of the East (that is, *Licinius's* own Subjects) entred into a solemn Resolve, to adhere to and defend their Religion till they got *Constantine* informed of their Distress, and engaged for their Relief. When this was represented to *Constantine*, he was much affected with it, says *Eusebius de vita Const.* and resolved to help the oppressed, thinking it a pious and holy Action, to save a Multitude, by destroying of one treacherous Person, tho' a Colleague and Brother-in-Law; and his engaging in this War against *Licinius*, was by the whole Eastern Church, ascribed to an immediate Conduct of Divine Providence. It ended happily for Christianity, and gave it a legal Establishment through the whole Empire. Yet when *Constantine* called the first general Council to meet at *Nice anno 325*, they were so far from quarrelling the Lawfulness of the Eastern League, that they blest God for the Success it had, and entertained *Constantine* with Panegyrics full of high Praises and Commendations, in which *Eusebius* himself is said to have had a principal Share.

Having thus wrestled out among the Fathers, as once in my Lifetime, I did, from a much worse Body of Men, with whom I had been charitably classed, I come now, to consider the Sentiments of our first Reformers, anent National Covenanting. And these will easily appear from their Transactions at *Edinburgh, December 3d, 1557. Perth, May last, 1559*
Leith

Leith, April 12th, 1560. and Ayr, September 4th, 1562. In all which their Duty (as they say) being well considered by them, and the Commands of God for Reformation, they in the most solemn Manner, before God and the Congregation, promised to maintain the Preaching of the Holy Evangel, and Ministers thereof, against all Persons who shall oppose the Doctrine by them received. Now that these were religious Covenants, gone into for Reformation, my Surveyer himself will own, when the History of these Times comes to his Hands; which I wish he had seen, before he made his Remarks on the *Queries*; and then I am sure he would not have so much as insinuated that these Covenants were only civil Alliances made against Papists. Plainly they were such Pieces of Reformation, as had been made in *France, Germany, the Low Countries Helvetia, Piedmont,* and other Protestant Churches, after whom our Reformers copied. *Knox* himself tell us frequently through his Book, that he had never urged any Doctrine or Practice in the Kirk, but what had been recommended to him by the ablest and most Orthodox Divines in the World. And with respect to the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, *Theodora Beza*, being informed by Mr. *Knox*, that the Court had a Mind to bring in Bishops, directs a Letter to him from *Geneva April 12th 1572*, which is extant among his Epistles, in which, "He blesses God, that the Kirk of Scotland, hath the pure Religion and good Order. And, "N. B. *The Band to hold fast the Doctrine*, and beseecheth him and his Fellow-labourers, to hold fast these two; for says he, if the one be lost, the other cannot continue long." *Calderwood's Hist. Page 37.* This Advice of the famous *Beza*,

has had but an indifferent Effect, I must own, upon some our modern Church-men, who have signaliz'd their Zeal on other Occasions, and yet now have tamely discharged these sacred *Bands*, by which, under God and the Holy Scriptures, our Religion and Liberties have in a great Measure been preserved. But the most unmannerly Part of my Friend's Answer to the 14 *Qu.* is his saying that our *blessed Reformers did not understand their own Principles*. Yet I am hopeful, he will take his Word again, when he finds our Reformation from Popery was not entirely managed, by Mrs. *Jo. Rough, Craig, and Knox, &c.* Hard Names for an *Anticovenant*; But that the whole Body of the Protestant Ministry, with the far better and knowing Part of the Nobility, Gentry, and Commons concurred in its Settlement, many of whom were as learned Men, as have ever since appeared in the World. So that it is not kind, to give it no worse Name, to say that our Reformers did not understand their own Principles. And I defy my Surveyer, and all others, to show me one Orthodox Divine, learned or unlearned, in the Church of *Scotland*, since the Reformation, who have denied the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, till he himself, with some few others, have happily cast up to enlighten this darkned Age. But now that I am speaking of our Reformers, I cannot but observe the great odds I find in Market Days. About 6 or 7 Years ago, they were represented to me, by our new Schemers, as Men who had the very next Pretensions to the Thing we call *Infallibility*: And I was almost frighted from making any Reflections on their Opinions, as they are cited by the Author of the *Marrow of Modern Divinity*. And now to hear some of the Admirers of that Book, telling me, that

our Reformers, coming newly out of the Darkneſs of Popery, did not ſee the Inconſiſtency of Covenanting with the Principles of the Reformation, ſeems a little ſtrange and ſurprizing; yet, at the ſame Time, it juſtifies the common Account that is made of *Schiſmaticks*, that they ordinarily ſubdivide, and crumble into Sects, as much differing among themſelves, as any of them does from the Communion they have left. And if my Friend had not ſeverely cautioned me in his 2d Letter, againſt any Thing like Jeſting, I had a great Mind to have told him, partly in Jeſt, and as much in Earneſt, that his Principles, as they now ſtand, ſeem to be as much calculate for *Cromwel's* Time, as any e'er I know, where he might not only have lodged for ſome Time among the Independents, but gone thro' with little Obſervation the ſeveral Bodies of the Sectarians, till at length he had got among the *Pre-adamites*, where I found him.

I declare ingenuouſly, I am at a Stand to know my Surveyer's Principles: For I do not believe that a true Proteſtant of any Denomination, would talk at the Rate he does, where he ſays, our Covenants are a *real Reproach upon the Reformation, and that we had better lye ſtill under Popiſh Darkneſs and Idolatry, than to have reformed as we did.* This Way of ſpeaking, I muſt ſay, looks much fitter for a dark Room, than to come abroad in a Proteſtant Country. But that which makes this Way of doing more intolerable, is, that this Set of Men, we have now got among us, not only uſe the Freedom to miſeal our Covenants, but likewise, when we tell them modeſtly, that this is a little unmannerly; they have the Face to answer us, that we are acting the worſt Part of Popery upon them, *viz. tyranniſing over their*

Consciences. This Humour and Way of speaking runs thro' both the Papers I have got, and they visibly turn upon it, to that degree, that even my *Queries* which were designed only for private Use, are reckoned an Effect of this supposed Usurpation: But what kind of Consciences those are, that are so absolutely independent, that they will not submit to any Regulation, at least will not promise to hold by a Standard for half a Year, is what I cannot imagine. One wou'd be tempted to think, they're kept for other Purposes, than promoting the eternal and unvariable Truths of the Gospel, and if the Laws of the Land could reach this Men no otherwise, than that the Acts of Assembly seem to do; I reckon few would incline to give them above six Months Trust.

But before I go any further, in calm Blood, I would propose two or three Questions to my Friend's serious Consideration.

1mo, *Was it not a moral Duty upon our first Reformers, to abjure Popery, and to endeavour by all lawful Means, a Personal and National Reformation?*

2do, *Was it any Fault in them, to signify so much to the World, by Oath and Subscription?*

3tio, *Was there any Thing like Force or Compulsion, in managing the three first Covenants, mentioned in the Query?*

Whatever Methods were afterwards used, it was impossible for the Congregation to drag People into the Measures, till once they had got something like a legal Settlement themselves, which they only obtained in the Year 1562. Till then they wanted all the modern Engines of Power, and could have no other Influence upon one another, than what an independent Preacher may have upon his Audience.

ence. One of my Surveyer's Principles would have been very safe then; for he cou'd have told them, that they were not only usurping and tyrannizing over his Conscience, but meddling a little too familiarly with the standing Constitution and Laws of the Lands, which infallibly wou'd have kept him from incurring the hainous Guilt of Covenanting with God and the Congregation.

'Tis with the greatest Satisfaction, I dare say, that every true Protestant looks back upon our Reformation from *Popery*; and particularly upon these Covenants which were the very Soul and Life of it; and without which our worthy Ancestors could have never secured, either their Religion, or Civil Liberties, against a powerful Popish Party, who were using their last Efforts to put a Stop to that blessed Work; and to say, "That our Reformers left *Popery* merely that they might have the Opportunity themselves to tyrannize over other Mens Consciences, without having the old Doctors Pretensions to Infallibility," is a most unjust Calumny: And I defy the World to show me one Instance of this Kind of Usurpation in our first Reformers. On the contrary, if my Surveyer has not yet got the History of these Times, some of his Acquaintances in *Dundee* will tell him, that as the Reformation began early in *Angus* and *Mearns*, so some of the first Ministers of it, preached frequently in this Country, with wonderful Success, using no other Arguments than what the Bible afforded them with. And my Friend wou'd oblige me, when he comes to know the Story fully, if he wou'd let me see where the Crime lay in the Congregations of *Angus* and *Mearns*, their going up to *Perth* in the Circumstances it was then in, and

renewing Covenant with God, and the other Congregations there met, as they did *May 1559.*

I come now a little to consider the *Confession of Faith*, as 'tis called, in all the first and authentick Copies, or that National Covenant made in K. *James* the Sixth's Reign; and with Respect to it, there is nothing more plain, than that it had all the necessary Qualifications of a religious and lawful Oath, its Matter being Moral and Form Legal: So that, if there was any Thing amiss here, it must have been purely accidental, and cannot affect the Covenant itself to make it unlawful. It visibly includes and incorporates with itself the *Confession of Faith*, composed and authorised 1569, as the present happy Constitution does the *Westminster Confession*, composed 1643, and all the Arguments against this National Covenant, under its first and principal Form, equally militate against requiring Ministers, Professors of Divinity, School-masters, &c. to subscribe our *Confession of Faith*. And if my Friend has got over this difficult Step, as I reckon he has, the Church has still but indifferent Security of him, as you may plainly see by his Answer to the Eight Query.

But that we may view this Covenant in its most enlarged Sense, the Covenanters themselves tell us, that which moved them to go into it, was to secure the Church against *Popery*, and other Errors they were fearing, and were in Danger of, which looks very like an onerous Cause in a Protestant Country. Whereupon the King, Council, Parliament, and General Assembly of the Church, swore and subscribed this *Confession of Faith* and *National Covenant*, which to this Day we own, as to its Matter, to be revealed in, and commanded by the
Word

Word of God; the Errors abjured and condemned by it, being contrary to the Scriptures, the practical Duties engaged to in it being enjoined and warranted by Divine Precept, and what is sworn to concerning the King's Person, Authority, and other Civil Matters, seem absolutely agreeable to the Principles of the Revolution; so that I am sure that no true *Blew Presbyterian* can have any Quarrel against the National Covenant.

My Surveyer indeed seems to have a strong Inclination to misrepresent it; for when our Forefathers promised to continue during Life in the Obedience of the Doctrine and Discipline of this Church, under the Pains contained in the Law, and of the fearful Judgment of God at the Great Day, he says, "That is, they swore that Religion might be produced by humane Penalties, &c." Now if this be a fair Inference, let any Body judge: And if there be any Thing in the Premises, that will bear it, I've lost all Pretensions to Philosophy and common Sense. Plainly there's something like *Legerdemain* here. The Period as it stands in the Covenant runs thus, "Promising and Swearing by the great Name of the Lord our God, that we shall continue in the Obedience of the Doctrine and Discipline of this Kirk, and shall defend the same, according to our Vocation and Power, all the Days of our Lives, under the Pains, &c." But the last two Sentences are industriously kept out of his Narrative, to make Way for that Inference, that I dare say he himself wou'd not have had the Face to make, if he had repeated the whole Text. For in his first Paper, Page 6. he says, "Religion being our most valuable Privilege, all Men have a Right to defend it, even by War," (when

“(when that is necessary) as much as their Civil Liberties.” Now what did our Fore-fathers promise more, except to continue in the Obedience of that Doctrine and Discipline they reckon’d agreeable to the Word of God?

He shews something of Spleen too, *Page 2d*, or rather what is visibly worse, in saying, “The Covenant discovers a manifest Partiality in not abjuring the persecuting Spirit of *Popery*, with its other Errors.” Whereas ’tis obvious to any one who reads the Covenant, that after they abjured *Popery* by the Lump, and came to Particulars, the very first Thing they renounced and refused, is the *usurped Authority of the Roman Antichrist over the Consciences of Men*, &c. He adds *Ibidem*, “That the Covenant laid a Foundation on Men to practise the most inhumane Parts of *Popery*, which they did, as the Accounts of those Times bear.”

There must be a vast Deal of Brags and Assurance here; for the original Design of the Covenant was to abjure *Popery*, which it does in the most full and ample Manner imaginable, and particularly their persecuting Spirit and Usurpation over the Consciences of Men, as said is, which yet you see does not hinder my Surveyer from alledging, that Persecution, Compulsion, Civil Penalties, Force, &c. were the ordinary Attendants of the National Covenant; which makes me fancy that sometime or other he has got a dreadful Fright, which he has not yet recovered, nor thinks himself safe under any Government. But in Earnest, might it not be expected, that some Instances of Persecution under King *James the Sixth’s* Reign, should have been laid before us. Till these are produced and proven, my Friend must necessarily ly under the
 Scandal

Scandal of *Calumny*, of which no true Covenanters I dare say, will incline to give him easy Absolution.

'Tis certain the Covenant was tendred to all Ranks of Men in the Land, and this could not miss, when it became a Test of Loyalty to the King, as well as the Term of Communion with the Church. And I pray where lay the Fault of imposing it as a Civil Test, under the Penalties of the Law, more than obliging suspected *Papists* at this Day to abjure the *Pope's* Supremacy, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, &c. And I hope you will allow, that the Church was not obliged to take them into her Bosom, who were avowed Enemies to the Civil Government, or receive any into her Communion, before they came up to the Terms of it, which they could not do, till they were qualified as the Law then required. The *Independents* themselves received none into their Body, without Marks of Grace: And we see in this same Corner, the greater Part of a Congregation lying out in the State of the Old *Catechumenoi*, for want of this Evidence, some of whom no doubt think this Piece of Discipline as hard upon them, as if they were obliged to subscribe the Covenant, notwithstanding of all they have heard against it.

My Friend complains heavily thro' his Papers of the Dominion of the Clergy over the Christian Laity, but has not put himself to the Trouble to give so much as one Instance of it; only in the general he alledges, "The Peoples Consciences being fettered, 'tis but a small Consolation to them that this is done by a Presbytery, and not by a *Pope* or *Prelate*." I cannot understand what he means by

by this *Fettring*, if it be not the Obligation that Men are supposed to come under to adhere to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of our Church, when they become Members of it. Now good Mr. *Surveyer*, is there any Thing of *Fettring* here, but what is common to all the Churches of Christ thro' the World? Have they not all Standards and Confessions of Faith as well as we? Don't they require the same Submission and Obedience that the Church of *Scotland* does? Will not all your Reasoning, or rather Satyr on this Head, equally hold against all the Protestant Churches in *Europe*?

But seeing it is impossible for any Society to subsist, without a Power to put its Laws in Execution, I reckon you only imagine the Dominion to be wrong lodged, and that the Clergy have injuriously wrested it out of the Hands of the Christian People; some of whom indeed, in this same *Corner*, seem to have extraordinary Talents for directing and governing a Church; for they can determine the State of a Man's Soul by the Treats of his Face, demonstrate his Sincerity or Hypocrisy by the Strength and Sound of his Lungs, and are wonderfully well seen in all the Arts of *Calumny* and *Reproach*. But as there are very few who pretend to these eminent Gifts, so the Body and best informed Part of the Nation have been perfectly well pleased with our Constitution, ever since our Reformation.

As the Church of *Scotland* never used any undue Force to bring Men into her Communion, so she has all along shown a peculiar and distinguish'd Lenity to Dissenters, *E. G.* When the Doctors of *Aberdeen* Anno 1638, scrupled to subscribe the

National Covenant, with the additional Clause condemning *Episcopacy*, and the five Articles of *Perth*, a Committee of Ministers were sent to converse them upon these Heads. And afterwards, when a Set of People in that Town seemed to incline to the *Independent Way*, Mr. *Samuel Rutherford* wrote a very learned and religious Letter to them, advising them to a mutual Conference, before they left the Church, as you may see in his Letter to *Aberdeen* dated *St. Andrews*.

From which two Instances, 'tis plain, that as our Covenants have never gone heartily down about *Aberdeen*, so the Gentlemen of that Country have the least Reason of all others, to complain of any Thing like Force or Compulsion in managing of them.

However my Friend goes on in his decent and mannerly Way of miscalling our Covenants, and has scraped together a great Deal of vile History, to blacken them; which, tho' it were all true, says nothing against the Lawfulness of National Covenanting for Reformation, but only that the *Solemn League* was carried on by undue and violent Measures, which few doubt of. Yet to lay his Remarks, as he has done, so that they may equally reflect against all our Covenants in the Eye of an ignorant Reader, looks neither like an exact Historian, nor a fair Disputant. He has got some of them I reckon from some *independent* Writer. But if the Author's Faith, has been of a Piece with his History, he has made but a very indifferent Account of himself to his Congregation, when they received him.

For he says, "The Covenanters laid the King aside from the Exercise of his Royal Power, and
"wou'd

"wou'd not so much as suffer him to live in one
 "of his own Houses with Freedom and Safety; till
 "he should swear to settle Religion through all his
 "Dominions, according to the Covenant." Now
 which of the *Charles's* he means, Father or Son, is
 hard to determine. But with Respect to King
Charles the First, every Body knows the *Scots* Na-
 tion was never honoured with his Presence after
 the *Solemn League* was gone into. And that all the
 Misfortunes that happen'd him in *England*, were
 intirely owing to the *Sectarians*, whereof the *Inde-*
pendents had their own large Share. When the *Junto*
 were going to bring him to a Trial for his Life,
 the Parliament of *Scotland* sent up *Lotbrian*, *Obiesly*,
 and *Glendoring*, as the Church did Mr. *Robert*
Blair Minister at *St. Andrews*, to remonstrate a-
 gainst their Proceedings, which they did, as their
 Papers bear, dated 24. *February* 1645. Bishop *Bur-*
net in the History of his own Time, Vol. I. Page
 69. tells us, "The Presbyterians were much a-
 "gainst putting the King to Death, and were e-
 "very where fasting and praying for his Preserva-
 "tion." But if he means K. *Charles* the II. he
 has far less to say here; for all the World knows,
 that the Covenanters proclaimed him King, and
 brought him Home upon his Father's Death. 'Tis
 true indeed they tendered the *Solemn League* unto
 him in the Firth of *Spey*, before his Landing, which
 he took, with what Affection I shall not say; but
 his taking it again at *Scoon*, when he was crowned
January first 1650, was no great Evidence of Com-
 pulsion in the first Instance, especially when we con-
 sider, that his taking the Covenant, was proposed
 to him, and agreed on before he came out of *Holland*,
 and that he found the Doctrine, Discipline, Wor-
 ship

ship and Government of the Church, settled agreeably thereto when he came to *Scotland*. They fought likewise two famous Battles for him, the one at *Dumbar*, and the other at *Worcester*, for which as every Body knows, they were but indifferently rewarded at his Restoration, 1660. Now, if the rest of my Friend's History be of a Piece with this Swatch, it cannot much hurt the Covenanters I should think; but whether it be or not I cannot just now enquire, because I have not these A&S of *Assembly* by me, from which he says he has taken it. But it seems he suspects the Truth of his History himself, for when he has done with it, he begins to prophecy anent the Mischiefs that wou'd have attended our Covenants, if they had continued in Force. I had cited to him a Prophecy in my Queries out of the *Revelation*, which I thought look'd something like National Covenanting; to which he answer'd, That he had no Skill at unrid-dling Prophecies. However, since he has made a Shift to spring a great many of his own, how he has so soon acquired this extraordinary Gift, I don't pretend to know; but he makes very much Use of it through his second Paper, particularly where he says, " If the Covenanters had found no
 " Interruption in their Progress, this Nation had
 " very soon been reduced to the same State it was
 " in before the Reformation, true Divine Know-
 " ledge would have grown out of Request, and hu-
 " mane Compulsion come into its Room, the Cler-
 " gy having destroyed all their Enemies, and hav-
 " ing no Body to oppose or rival them, would
 " have grown first Lazy, and that Laziness would
 " have improven into Ignorance, and so these blind
 " Leaders, and their blind Followers, wou'd have

“ both fallen into the Ditch together.” Now as it wou’d be very unmannerly in me to offer to confute these wise and charitable Conjectures, so perhaps it might discourage my Friend from making any further Use of his prophetick Talents; and therefore I leave them in the same Situation I found them.

There’s another Thing in my Surveyer’s Performance that I cannot so easily digest, and that is, his maintaining, “ That Ignorance is always the Effect
“ of Uniformity, and is always dispelled in Proportion to the Breach of that Uniformity.” And to confirm this, he has got some very agreeable Instances of *Spanish* Stupidity, occasioned through want of Opposition, and of *German* and *French* Learning, acquired by the *Papists*, by having *Protestants* among them, and says in so many Words, “ There’s
“ no Doubt that Divisions, and even Heresies among Christians, excite Men to a more diligent
“ Study of the Scriptures, and consequently make
“ the Truth better understood, than it there had
“ been no such Divisions: And if I may be allowed, he adds, to make a Conjecture of the Designs of Providence, I wou’d think that this is
“ one Reason, why it is so frequently said in holy
“ Writ, *that these must come.*”

This looks as if he thought the supreme Being did not only barely permit, but actually sends Divisions and Heresies into the World, on Purpose to make Men good Christians, when yet he has pronounced a terrible Wo on these by whom they come. The Scripture commands us to pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, and the Removal of all Divisions and Animosities out of the Land; but my Friend, by a Litany of his own, very piously begs they may be

be inflamed, and that Swarms of *Sectarians* and *Hereticks* may be graciously sent to break that Uniformity, which produces nothing but Ignorance. And I must say, he acts just now very consistently with his own Principles, in satyrizing the Covenants and Constitution of his Mother Church; for however unnatural this might be in an uniform Whig, yet it is a plain and necessary Duty to him, who no doubt reckons, that hereby he dispels Ignorance, and shews the Mischiefs of Uniformity. He is angry it seems that we have settled upon a Foot of Parity; yet he must not think that I am just now to prove the Divine Right of Presbytery, for this I refer him to the Scriptures, and the learned Treatises that have been writ upon that Head. 'Tis enough for me at this Time to tell him, that tho' we maintain a Parity among Officers of the same Kind, yet we never pretended that they all had or should have equal Sense and Learning. We still own, that a Man may serve to Advantage in a remote Country Congregation, like mine, who would make but an indifferent Figure in a City; and yet this no more breaks our Parity, than it does, among the Lords of Session, who never pretended to equal Knowledge in the Civil Law, tho' their Commissions run all in the same Strain: So that there is nothing in our Constitution to hinder a Man from being a Philosopher, and at the same Time a true pac'd Presbyterian.

I own I could never fall upon a Standard of War for all Mankind, more than my Friend, or the B: of *Bangor*, can do on a Creed for the Church; which makes me think, that as I had never Use for the Half of the Sense of some others above me, so if I exercise my low Talents suitably, as I have got

them from the Author of Nature, the *Bangorian* Scheme itself will free me from contributing to that Ignorance and Stupidity, which is said always to attend that Body, of which I have the Honour to be a Member.

But that of which I am most afraid of by this Inquisition, is, that it be alledged I have used a little too much Familiarity with the Servants of another Master, in the Affairs of Religion, as the *B.* of *Bangor* phrases it. But when it is considered, that I have done nothing this Way, but in a fair Way of Reasoning, with a Gentleman, for whom I have still Esteem, I hope I shall come off by the *Bp's*. own Scheme, except in so far as my Arguments come short of proving the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, which I submit, as he does, to the private Judgment and Consciences of all Men.

B. Burnet, who knew the State of our Church indifferently well, and yet could not be supposed to be much-biassed in her Favours, says, in the History of his own Time, "That the Clergy were generally learned and knowing in their own Way; and that when *B. Leighton* and he went thro' the Western Counties, they found the Commons have an unusual Stock of Knowledge," which I dare say, is not much diminished to this very Day; whereas he tells us in another Book of his, intitled, *Discourses to the Clergy of Sarum*, "That many have applied him to put them in Orders, who would not have been allowed the Sacrament, where they underwent a Trial of their Knowledge:" So that it seems there's something of Ignorance, even where our Parity and Uniformity does not obtain. Every Body knows too, that the inferior Popish Clergy are profoundly ignorant, among whom there's still

still as many Divisions as my Friend could wish for. Nor does any believe, that all the *Independents* are Philosophers and learned Men, tho' I agree with him in this, that they are but indifferently classed in the *Solemn League*, or Acknowledgement of publick Sins, &c. Yet their giving them the Precedency of all their Associates, as they plainly do, seems to be some Kind of Apology, or at least says, they did not consult *Aristotle* or *Suarez* in categorizing them, or rather in plain *Scots*, that they thought they were as much Enemies to Presbyterian Government, as the others named with them; however they otherwise distinguished themselves by their Orthodoxy.

But in all the World I cannot understand, how our Constitution alone produces Ignorance so natively, as my Surveyer assures me it does. Is it because we have a publick Standard and Confession of Faith? Have not our Neighbours round about us the like? Is it because we oblige a certain Order of Men among us to subscribe it, and to preach and teach nothing contrary to it? Don't all the Churches in the World the same? Is it because our *Confession of Faith* is a little larger than some other Church Formularies, and contains some Doctrines that *Independents*, and some others don't admire? This can be no good Evidence of Ignorance, before these Doctrines are shown to be inconsistent with the Word of God, which is not yet done. Do we discharge People from reading the Bible or other Books, even of the *Independent* Composition? Don't we daily advise and exhort Men to improve their natural Faculties to the utmost, and provide them in all imaginable Helps for doing this? So that I imagine my Friend may be still

something of a Whig himself; and has only made this ill-natured and unjust Reflection, thro' that Ignorance and Stupidity, which he says always attends Uniformity.

Thus I have gone over the great Lines of these two Papers, lately sent me by an unknown Hand, though not in the same Order the Author has placed them; and I own they are writ, with so much Wit and Liveliness, that it would very much justify his Notion of Uniformity, if I had not a tolerable Guess of the Parent.

But if Liberty and Religion are valuable Things; and if they are not, what is Valuable? If the maintaining the Purity of the Christian Religion, free from Idolatry, Superstition, Imposture, and Cruelty; and if the maintaining a Protestant Church in her essential Powers, which without Partiality, I reckon one of the best in the World; if these Things, I say, be just Grounds of Calumny, or miscalling our Covenants, I leave to the Sense of all Mankind, and to the late *B. of Bangor* among the rest to judge.

The Third is visibly done by the same Hand; in the Preamble whereof the Author lays down some very bold and daring Positions, such as, 1^{mo}, The *Jews* being of a stubborn Disposition, God gave them a Religion suitable to it, as if the supreme Governour of the World, did not so much consult his own Glory, as the Humour and Caprice of his Creatures in his Management of them. 2. That the *Jewish* Religion was incorporated with their Civil Constitution, and made a Condition of their possessing the Land of *Canaan*. Now this Assertion is false in both Parts of it, for by all the History of the Old Testament, we see a specifick
Diffe-

Difference betwixt the Civil and Ecclesiastick Jurisdictions: From *Moses's* Time and downwards, the *Jewish* Church and State had ordinarily distinct Rulers Priests and Levites for the one Judges and Kings for the other; distinct Acts, Sacrificing, &c. in the Church, Death, Banishment, &c. in the State; distinct Objects, Matters of the Lord, and Matters of the King, 2 *Chron.* xix. 11. Distinct Laws ceremonial for the Church, judicial for the Commonwealth, and moral for both. The Form of their Civil Government was frequently alter'd, but that of the Church continu'd unalterably the same; and every Body knows they had distinct Periods of Duration, the Church existing (tho' corrupt) after the Civil Government was overturn'd by the *Romans*. So till my Friend put himself to the Trouble of proving that the *Jewish* Religion was incorporated with the Civil Constitution, a great many well meaning People will still imagine them to be distinct. For the other Part of his Assertion, as it visibly wants Proof, so it labours under this little Disadvantage that we are told, *Gen.* xvii. 1,—15. That *Abraham's* Right, and that of his Posterity to the Land of *Canaan*, was fully settled by that gracious Covenant God was pleased to enter into with him and them, long before the Ceremonial Law was promulgate. 3. He observes, that the Ceremonial Law was only a political Religion; and this Observation, he says, leads to make a true Judgment of the Nature of these *Jewish* Covenants gone into for Reformation. But good Master Surveyer, may I ask where you learned this mannerly Way of speaking, to call a Divine Institution a meer political Religion? Or where in all the World did you ever read or hear

of such a Religion? If that which you and your Associates are now making up, does not some Way deserve that Name, I should have thought that any Christian would have blush'd to call that Religion meerly political, which so plainly prefigured Christ, and the Blessings of the Gospel. But besides, the *Jews* had the Moral Law and Covenant of Grace dispensed to them; so that, if you allow there was any thing like sincere Religion among them, 'tis impossible but they must have Covenanted to perform moral Duties, and not meerly political Ones, as you aver, which intirely spoils your politick Scheme, and indeed is too airy and metaphysical to hold in a Matter of that Importance, wherein the Souls of a whole Nation for many Generations were concerned, who even in their Ceremonial Worship, could not serve God acceptably, without spiritual Views. And let me tell you in calm Blood, this first Branch of your Distinction, on which you found your Notion of the *Jewish* Covenants, makes the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy and Levitical Service a Piece of meer Pageantry, unworthy of God as a sovereign Spirit, and degrades it below any heathenish Institution in the World, none of which were ever reckoned meerly political in the Countries where they obtained, as you irreverently say God's Ceremonial Law to the *Jews* was. Yet my Friend being fond (after so many Ages) of the Discovery he has made, that the Ceremonial Law was only a political Religion, goes on to show, that the *Jewish* Covenants bound only to external and political Duties. Now suppose this to be true, what does it say against the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, which I plead for? He sees a plain Plan of National Covenanting approv'd of God in these same

Texts

Texts he himself cites; and tho' these *Jews* promised only to perform external and political Obedience to the Laws of *Moses*, as he says, yet I should think this by it self were a sufficient Warrant for Christians to promise Obedience, thro' the Grace of God, to the Laws of Christ, and the Performance of moral Duties. For if a Nation, as my Surveyer allows, may lawfully covenant to reform the external and political Parts of Religion, what in all the World should hinder them at the same Time to promise, thro' Divine Assistance, to reform their Hearts and Lives? So that I wonder with what Conscience he can quarrel our Reformers for leaving the Trumpery and Hierarchy of the Church of *Rome*, and Covenanting to support a Religion, the external Frame whereof they reckon'd agreeable to the Word of God.

The Texts of Scripture he cites to prove that the *Jewish* Covenants related only to Things political and ceremonial are, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 31, 32, 33. 2 *Chron.* xv. 12, 13, 15. *Ezra* x. 3, 5, 8. 2 *Chron.* xxix. 10. And it seems strange that he who very wittily can find a spiritual Meaning in every other Passage of holy Writ, can see nothing like it in these, but impiously dresses up the Covenanting *Jews* as so many Actors in a Puppet Play, or at most as Subjects procuring Acts of Indemnity from their Kings, by swearing civil Allegiance to them. But it happens a little unlucky to this new Scheme, that instead of swearing Obedience to a civil Law, the *Jews* and their Kings make their Oath to God Almighty himself, and promise to seek him with all their Hearts and Souls, to keep his Testimonies and perform his Covenant, &c. Now all the Art and Sophistry in the World will never make these meer external Acts

Acts of Obedience to a political Law; for as they are visibly of another Nature, so they never were, nor will be performed without an inward Principle of Holiness and Divine Life. And indeed it would be highly absurd to imagine, that all the Crimes and Enormities of *Israel* and *Judah*, during the Reigns of their Idolatrous Kings, were no more than a breaking in upon the civil Constitution, and their solemn Covenanting in the Periods referred to, no more than their accepting an Indemnity from their religious Princes. This would bring the Notions of Sin and Covenanting for Reformation lower than they have been yet in the World, nay even tempt Men to think that Complaint and Threatning was unjust, which we have *Is. xxix. 31.* *For as much as this People draw near me with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour me, but they have removed their Heart far from me, and their Fear toward me is taught by the Precept of Men: Therefore behold, &c.* Now how can we imagine they should have been quarrelled for Hypocrisy, if it had not been their Duty to serve God *in Spirit and in Truth*, since 'tis plain that meer external Service answers all the Ends of my Surveyer's political Religion.

By this Time I hope every Body sees how unfairly the *Jewish* Covenants are represented in the foregoing Letter; And that what the Author calls a Demonstration proving them to be merely political, does not amount to the Thing we call a probable Argument. All I shall say further on this Head, is earnestly to wish, that none of these heavy Woes denounced by our blessed Saviour against the *Pharisees*, for perverting the Law of *Moses*, may ever light upon my good Friend, or
any

any of his Associates, but that they may repent and return to the Orthodox Faith.

My Survyer having laid down the foregoing Positions, as the Foundation of his political Scheme, and his Judgment anent the *Jewish* Covenants, goes on to make Improvement of them, and says, "That nothing of the *Jewish* Reformati^ons or Covenanting with God may be lawfully imitated by Christians." In Answer to which, I shall lay before him some plain *Queries* touching the several Heads he harangues on, and if these do not hang in an exact Chain, I have no other Apology for't, but that I am following my Leader.

Query 1st, Why in accounting for the *Jewish* Religion, do you always omit the Moral Law and Covenant of Grace, the two most valuable Branches of it?

2. If you had been pleased to name those, as you ought to have done, how do you think they would have wal'd with your political Religion?

3. If ever there was a Time when God was so well pleased with meer external Service, without inward Affections, as to entail Blessings upon it, and declare that it was an adequate Obedience to his Law, as you manifestly maintain in the Case of the *Jews*?

4. Does not Christianity as much distinguish Christians from Infidels, as the *Jewish* Religion distinguished the *Jews* from the Heathenish and Idolatrous Nations round about them?

5. Does not Christianity become a National Religion where it is nationally profess'd? And were it not to be wish'd that it should spread it self thro' the whole World, even at the Expence of National Covenanting?

6. Is

6. Is it fair through your Papers to dress up our blessed Reformers as Men ignorant of their own Principles, and never consulting with the Word of God, or their own Consciences, in that grand Affair of leaving Popery?

7. Is it decent in a Member of the Church of Scotland to say, as you do, "That we had much better continued in the Darkness and Superstition of the Church of Rome, than to have reformed as we did?"

8. Would not any other Protestant, but your self, blush to make such vile Comparisons betwixt Popery and our Reformation, as you do through your Letter? And should not your Conscience have check'd you in blackening that glorious Work which at last you are forced to own to have been lawful in a political Sense?

9. And if Men may lawfully enter into Covenant for preserving their Lives and Fortunes, I would fain know why at the same Time they may not add a Clause about their holy Religion, as being their most valuable Interest? Is it not impious then to insinuate that there is no odds betwixt Popish Rulers imposing gross Absurdities upon the World, and Protestants Covenanting to maintain the plain and undeniable Truths of God's Word, which was all our Reformers ever did?

10. Are you in Earnest when you say, "That the Civil Magistrate serves for no other Purpose to the Church, but to preserve external Order, and keep Sects from devouring one another in his Dominions?"

11. What think you of these Kings of Judah, who removed the High Places, brake the Images, and took away

away all the Abominations out of the Land? And of that Promise, *Isaiab* xlix. 23?

12. But since you talk so contemptibly of the Reformation, carried on by the Pious Kings of *Israel* and *Judab*, I ask how you like our own gracious Sovereign's Royal Proclamation against Vice and Prophanity? And with what Conscience you read it in your Congregation, since in so many Words you say that the Princes of this World have no Divine Warrant to support Religion by Laws or Penalties of their own? Every Act (you add) of this Nature committed by them is an Act of Violence and Usurpation, &c.

13. How do ye like the 23 Chapter of our *Confession of Faith*, which I reckon you have subscribed once and again?

14. What are your Thoughts of *Constantine's* War against *Licinius*, which ended in settling Christianity as the publick and authorized Religion of the *Roman Empire*? Or to come near Home, what think you of the glorious Revolution, which happened in *Britain* 1688, under the Conduct of a Prince of immortal Fame, and particularly of that Association which was subscribed at his Landing, which visibly bears all the Essentials of a National Covenant for Reformation?

15. Is it not a tolerable Presumption that your Notions of our Covenants are a little out of the Way, when you see all the Protestant Churches in the World going into the same Method and Manner of Covenanting, that the Church of *Scotland* did at her Reformation, except that of *England* and *Denmark*, where their Princes concurred?

16. Is it any better Argument against the Lawfulness of National Covenanting, that there is no ex-
press

press Command for it in the *New Testament*, than this would be against observing the Lord's Day, and baptizing Infants, &c. and especially when there are many plain References in the *New Testament* to the *Old*, and both of them are equally the Word of God?

17. Since you own that true Religion was the same among the *Jews* that it is now, why may not Christians covenant to perform moral Duties as they did?

18. How do the Notions of a licentious and boundless Liberty, which run through your first two Letters, agree with the Doctrine of non Resistance, and passive Obedience, so powerfully held forth in the third?

19. Can you say, in composing your Scheme, you have as much consulted the Word of God, and the History of our Reformation, as you have done the Bishop of *Bangor's* Works? And have you not obviously improven and stretched the Bishop's Principles, further than I dare say he ever intended they should go?

The Poscript of this Letter seems to have been calculated for a superior Genius than mine; for I frankly own I cannot construct some Parts of it into common Sense. But so far as I understand it I shall follow the Author with a few Remarks.

And, *imo*, Tho' it be plain that the Apostolical Creed was known before the third Century, yet that is not so much the Case here, as for what Ends and Purposes it and other Creeds were at first composed, which could be no other than to be publick Standards and Formularies for preserving Christian Communion, and condemning Heresies; and indeed this went as near to National Covenanting, as the persecuted

secuted State of the primitive Church could allow.

2do, My Friend says, " He knows not for what " End Creeds and Confessions are brought into the " Controversy, unless it be to perplex it," which makes me fancy that he is a little out of Humour, when he hears of Creeds and Confessions of Faith; and no wonder I must say, for they are very sib, and nearly related to Covenants, which he does not much admire; they plainly stand and fall together, all Creeds and Confessions of Faith being Covenants, and *e contra* all Convenants are Creeds and Confessions of Faith: And every Body that has Eyes to look into our Books, may see that ever since the Year of God 1580, our National Covenant is called the *Confession of Faith*: And no wonder, for it contains the same Doctrines, which are taught and profest by the Church of *Scotland* at this Day.

3tio, I am not at all surprized that I have got a blunt Answer, as 'tis called, to my eight *Query* since I defy my Surveyer, and all his Associates, to show me any essential Difference betwixt covenanting and subscribing a Creed or Confession of Faith. How inconsistent then must it be to allow the one, and yet impugn the Lawfulness of the other?

I have now done for this Champaign with the Author of these three Letters, which some Time ago were clandestinely sent me. And if it were not that there is a certain kind of Pleasure, in contending for the *good Old Cause*, it would be no great Satisfaction, I should think, thus to be fighting in the Dark, or reasoning with a disguised Gentleman, who is so very fluctuating, as to change his Notions of the same Things through all his Papers.

F I N I S.

[illegible]

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